



PHILIPPINES SECURITY ANALYSIS REPORT

AI-Assisted Open Source Intelligence Assessment

Analysis Period: March 29, 2026 - April 05, 2026

This report was produced using open-source intelligence analysis. The assessment is grounded in publicly available reporting and should be cross-referenced with primary sources. RSS feed articles are listed in the annex for reference.

Executive Summary

This analysis could not be generated due to a technical issue.

Key Developments

- Unable to generate a security analysis for Philippines at this time.
- Please try again later or select an alternative analysis method.

Outlook

Please check back later for an updated analysis.

ANNEX: COLLECTED ARTICLES BY SOURCE

Source: GMA Network

- [PCO warns vs fake news on energy supply, pricing](#) (2026-04-05 05:25)

The Presidential Communications Office on Sunday warned the public against spreading fake news about energy security, supply, or pricing amid the soaring fuel prices caused by the ongoing conflict in the Middle East.

- [CBCP to Pinoy Catholics: Take time to deepen understanding of peace this Easter](#) (2026-04-05 03:38)

The Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) on Easter Sunday urged Filipino Catholics to take time to deepen their understanding of peace this Easter Season amid the ongoing conflicts around the world.

- [Catholics should resist hatred, hostility amid Middle East war, Advincula urges in Easter message](#) (2026-04-05 03:08)

Manila Archbishop Jose Cardinal Advincula on Sunday said the Easter Season urges Catholics to resist hatred and hostility amid the ongoing conflict in the Middle East.

- [Pinoy Catholics welcome Easter Sunday with 'Salubong'](#) (2026-04-05 02:28)

Many Filipino Catholics woke up early before dawn on Easter Sunday to witness the traditional "Salubong" or the reenactment of the first meeting of the risen Christ and the Blessed Virgin Mary.

- [DOH logs 1,091 road crash accidents on Holy Week 2026](#) (2026-04-05 02:12)

The Department of Health (DOH) has so far recorded 1,091 road crash accidents during this year's Holy Week.

- [PCG: Almost 200,000 outbound passengers seen in seaports during Holy Week](#) (2026-04-05 01:27)

Close to 200,000 outbound passengers were monitored at seaports nationwide during Holy Week, the Philippine Coast Guard said Sunday.

- [Filipinos start returning from Holy Week break](#) (2026-04-05 00:16)

After a three-day holiday for the Holy Week break, Filipinos have started returning from their vacations on Easter Sunday morning.

- [LIVE UPDATES: Conflict in the Middle East \(April 5, 2026\)](#) (2026-04-04 23:16)

Here are the latest news and updates on the US-Israel war against Iran and related developments.

- [Marcos urges Filipinos to build a kind and united country](#) (2026-04-04 22:05)

President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. on Sunday urged Filipinos to create a compassionate and united nation as the Christian world celebrates Easter.

- [DOE: Safe passage in Strait of Hormuz is risk management, won't immediately bring down fuel prices](#) (2026-04-04 13:15)

Iran's decision to allow energy supplies headed for the Philippines to safely cross the Strait of Hormuz was part of the government's risk management initiatives and would not immediately bring down domestic fuel prices, Department of Energy Secretary Sharon Garin said Saturday.

- [PCG: Around 300K inbound, outbound passengers traveled during Good Friday](#) (2026-04-04 07:11)

The Philippine Coast Guard said Saturday it monitored a total of 147,035 outbound passengers and 146,691 inbound passengers in all ports nationwide during Good Friday.

- [PNP: Good Friday 'peaceful' nationwide](#) (2026-04-04 06:52)

The Philippine National Police on Saturday said the country's observance of Good Friday was peaceful.

- [Phil. Red Cross says it treated over 7K patients during Holy Week 2026](#) (2026-04-04 05:41)

Over 7,000 patients have been attended to by the Philippine Red Cross nationwide so far during the observance of Holy Week 2026, the agency said Saturday.

- [BuCor promotes faith-based rehab for PDLs](#) (2026-04-04 05:24)

BuCor promotes faith-based rehab for PDLs

- [Raffy Tulfo expresses concern over NAIA Terminal 1 ceiling collapse](#) (2026-04-04 02:46)

Raffy Tulfo expresses concern over NAIA Terminal 1 ceiling collapse

- [LIVE UPDATES: Conflict in the Middle East \(April 4, 2026\)](#) (2026-04-03 23:27)

Here are the latest news and updates on the US-Israel war against Iran and related developments.

- [Lockdown due to 'Cicada' COVID-19 variant false, says DOH](#) (2026-04-03 15:48)

The Department of Health (DOH) on Friday refuted claims of an emergency lockdown due to the "Cicada" COVID-19 variant.

- [PH to continue engagements with Myanmar amid election of new president](#) (2026-04-03 11:25)

Malacañang said that the Philippines will continue its engagements with Myanmar amid the election of Min Aung Hlaing as president.

- [Manila Archdiocese urges clergy for world peace intentions on Good Friday](#) (2026-04-03 08:40)

The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Manila (RCAM) has urged the clergy and the lay faithful to include a special intention for world peace during Good Friday rites.

- [PNP: 7 drowning incidents recorded so far amid Holy Week](#) (2026-04-03 05:33)

PNP: 7 drowning incidents recorded so far amid Holy Week

- [Comelec ends BARMM voter registration with over 161K applications](#) (2026-04-03 05:22)

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- [LTFRB summons taxi operator over alleged scam attempt on K-pop idol Soobin](#) (2026-04-03 04:01)

The Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB) has issued a show cause order against a taxi operator over the alleged attempt to scam K-pop idol Choi Soobin in Cebu.

- [Constitutionality of laws on maritime zones, sea lanes questioned before SC](#) (2026-04-03 03:22)

A former professor of the University of the Philippines has asked the Supreme Court (SC) to nullify some provisions of the Philippine Maritime Zones Act (MZA) and Philippine Archipelagic Sea Lanes Act (ASLA) for being unconstitutional, saying it has enabled the navigation of Chinese vessels into the country's waters.

- [PCG, Chinese embassy clash over Spanish-era map with West PH Sea features](#) (2026-04-03 03:05)

PCG, Chinese embassy clash over Spanish-era map with West PH Sea features

- [Marcos on Good Friday: Live with compassion, greater faith](#) (2026-04-03 01:55)

President Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. urged the public, especially the Catholic faithful, to live with greater faith and compassion as the Catholic faithful observes Good Friday.

- [TIMELINE: PH-Iran relations throughout centuries](#) (2026-04-03 01:23)

Iran has allowed Philippine-flagged vessels to pass through the Strait of Hormuz amid the heightened tensions in the Middle East, the Department of Foreign Affairs announced recently.

- [Light traffic observed along NLEX, SLEX on Good Friday](#) (2026-04-03 00:23)

Light traffic observed along NLEX, SLEX on Good Friday

- [Over 374K passengers monitored in ports on Maundy Thursday](#) (2026-04-03 00:20)

The Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) on Good Friday reported a total of 374,867 passengers in ports across the country on Maundy Thursday as part of its monitoring for the Holy Week travel surge.

- [LIVE UPDATES: Conflict in the Middle East \(April 3, 2026\)](#) (2026-04-02 23:11)

LIVE UPDATES: Conflict in the Middle East (April 3, 2026)

- [Household employers urged: Register kasambahays with SSS \(2026-04-02 17:29\)](#)

The Social Security System has urged household employers to register their household helpers or kasambahay with the SSS to ensure that they are covered by the government's social security protection program.

- [BI: 4 foreigners nabbed in Muntinlupa, Pampanga for financial fraud \(2026-04-02 17:02\)](#)

The Bureau of Immigration recently arrested four foreigners for their alleged involvement in financial fraud and other illicit activities.

- [Passenger volume eases at NAIA Terminal 3 on Maundy Thursday \(2026-04-02 12:47\)](#)

There were fewer passengers on Maundy Thursday at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA) Terminal 3 amid the Holy Week exodus of travelers.

- [Supreme Court ends case on SEC order to revoke Rappler's incorporation papers \(2026-04-02 12:41\)](#)

The Supreme Court has formally terminated the case involving a Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) order seeking to revoke the certificates of incorporation of digital media company Rappler Inc.

- [Cardinal David urges Catholics to pray for peace in Middle East on Maundy Thursday \(2026-04-02 11:58\)](#)

Kalookan Bishop Pablo Virgilio Cardinal David called on the faithful to pray for peace in the Middle East, as they spend time in adoration before the Blessed Sacrament on Maundy Thursday.

- [Advincula to Catholics: Be humble, compassionate amid conflicts \(2026-04-02 11:25\)](#)

Manila Archbishop José Cardinal Advincula on Maundy Thursday called on the faithful to live the virtues of humility and compassion amid the ongoing conflicts around the world.

- [Immigration nabs Chinese man posing as Filipino for alleged espionage \(2026-04-02 11:21\)](#)

The Bureau of Immigration (BI) said Wednesday it arrested a Chinese citizen with alleged ties to espionage and claims he was posing as a Filipino at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA) Terminal 1 on Monday.

- [CBCP health commission urges parishes to enforce smoke-free, vape-free policies](#) (2026-04-02 11:13)

The Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) on Thursday called on the public to stop smoking and vaping, especially in the vicinity of sacred places during the Holy Week.

- [BI: Viral female passenger offloaded for inconsistent statements about trip](#) (2026-04-02 10:54)

The Bureau of Immigration (BI) deferred the travel of a female passenger at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA) due to alleged inconsistencies in her statements about her overseas trip.

- [ICC Appeals Chamber to rule on Duterte's bid vs jurisdiction on April 22](#) (2026-04-02 10:07)

The Appeals Chamber of the International Criminal Court (ICC) on April 22 will issue its decision on the appeal of former President Rodrigo Duterte against an earlier ruling that junked his challenge to the jurisdiction of the ICC.

- [PNP: 375 gas stations still closed due to supply shortage](#) (2026-04-02 09:44)

The Philippine National Police (PNP) on Maundy Thursday said 375 gas stations remain temporarily closed due to a shortage of petroleum products.

- [Philippine vessels get safe passage from Iran in Strait of Hormuz](#) (2026-04-02 09:19)

Iran has assured the Philippines that Philippine-flagged vessels, energy sources, and all Filipino seafarers would be allowed safe passage through the Strait of Hormuz, which has been affected by the Middle East conflict, the Department of Foreign Affairs said on Thursday.

- [PCG monitors nearly 125k passengers in ports on Maundy Thursday](#) (2026-04-02 06:52)

The Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) has monitored nearly 125,000 passengers in all ports nationwide from 6 a.m. to 12 p.m. on Maundy Thursday.

- [Sandiganbayan finds 2 ex-DPWH execs guilty over P5.3-M right of way claims](#) (2026-04-02 06:33)

The Sandiganbayan has found two former Department of Public and Highways (DPWH) officials guilty of two counts of graft and nine counts of falsification of public documents over P5.3

million right-of-way (ROW) payment claims.

- [Cardinal Advincula to priests suffering from mental health: Feel it to heal it](#) (2026-04-02 04:58)

Manila Archbishop Jose Cardinal Advincula on Maundy Thursday raised concern about the rising number of priests who are suffering from mental difficulty and emotional burden, urging them to acknowledge the issue and learn to reconnect with others and renew their identity as God's beloved.

- [DOLE: Double pay for workers on duty on Maundy Thursday](#) (2026-04-02 03:21)

The Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) reminded employers to grant double pay, or 200% of the regular daily wage, to workers on duty on Maundy Thursday.

- [De Lima pushes for comprehensive compensation for Filipino comfort women](#) (2026-04-02 02:59)

A full compensation for Filipino comfort women or the sex slaves of the Japanese soldiers during the World War II has been proposed in the House of Representatives.

- [Marcos on Maundy Thursday: 'Leadership begins with service'](#) (2026-04-02 01:47)

As the Catholic faithful commemorate Maundy Thursday, President Ferdinand “Bongbong” Marcos Jr. said the holy day is a reminder for leaders to put the needs of other people before their own.

- [No tsunami threat to PH after Indonesia earthquake --PHIVOLCS](#) (2026-04-02 00:56)

There is no tsunami threat to the country following a strong earthquake that hit Indonesia Thursday morning, the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (PHIVOLCS) said.

- [LOOK: Long lines at bus terminal in Cubao, QC; light traffic along NLEX](#) (2026-04-01 23:54)

Passengers going to Bulacan and Nueva Ecija flocked to a bus terminal along EDSA in Cubao, Quezon City early morning of Maundy Thursday.

- [LIVE UPDATES: Conflict in the Middle East \(April 2, 2026\)](#) (2026-04-01 22:46)

LIVE UPDATES: Conflict in the Middle East (April 2, 2026)

- [PNP: P11B in illegal drugs seized, 16k drug suspects nabbed in Q1 2026](#) (2026-04-01 17:51)

The Philippine National Police (PNP) has arrested over 16,000 drug suspects and recovered more than P11 billion in illegal drugs in the first quarter of 2026.

- [LTFRB to observe 4-day work week starting April 6](#) (2026-04-01 17:30)

The Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB) will implement a four-day work schedule starting Monday, April 6, 2026 in accordance with the government's energy-saving policy.

- [BI warns passengers vs fake eTravel sites amid Holy Week exodus](#) (2026-04-01 16:04)

The Bureau of Immigration (BI) on Wednesday reminded travelers to be vigilant against scammers who take advantage of the surge in passenger traffic by operating fraudulent websites that charge fees for eTravel, or the government's electronic travel declaration system.

- [PCSO: No jackpot winners for April 1 major lotto draws](#) (2026-04-01 14:35)

No one won the jackpot prizes in the major lotto draws of the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office (PCSO) on Wednesday, April 1.

- [Tinambac LGU: Due process underway amid barangay kagawad's alleged abuses](#) (2026-04-01 14:06)

The local government unit (LGU) of Tinambac, Camarines Sur on Wednesday said the alleged abuses of a barangay official and his sons have already been acted upon even before the viral letter of a young girl to President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.

- [Customs takes custody of Zaldy Co's 8 luxury cars in Manila compound](#) (2026-04-01 13:58)

The Bureau of Customs on Wednesday took custody of eight out of 18 luxury cars linked to former Ako Bicol Rep. Zaldy Co and, which were seized in January.

- [Can the US and Trump be held liable for economic costs of Middle East conflict?](#) (2026-04-01 13:41)

Countries grappling with the economic fallout from the US-Israel attacks on Iran may file a lawsuit against the US government and its present leader, Donald Trump, for allegedly violating international law, a report on "24 Oras" said Wednesday.

- [NLEX traffic exceeds daily average amid Holy Week exodus](#) (2026-04-01 13:22)

The number of vehicles traversing the North Luzon Expressway (NLEX) has exceeded its daily average as the Holy Week exodus has gotten underway.

- [DSWD gears up for Holy Week with 4.5M emergency food packs](#) (2026-04-01 12:54)

The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) has placed all field offices on alert to ensure a rapid response to emergencies during the Holy Week observance.

- [Elder sister of girl who wrote Marcos among rape victims of barangay kagawad's son](#) (2026-04-01 12:29)

The sister of a young girl who wrote to President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. to report the alleged abuses of a barangay official in her community in Tinambac, Camarines Sur is a person with disability (PWD) who was allegedly raped by one of the local official's sons.

- [PH asks Iran to grant 'non-hostile country' status for safe passage in Strait of Hormuz](#) (2026-04-01 12:12)

The Philippines has asked Iran to designate it as a “non-hostile country” and ensure the safe passage of Philippine-flagged vessels along the Strait of Hormuz amid the tensions in the Middle East.

- [High fuel prices push Holy Week travelers to public transport](#) (2026-04-01 12:05)

Rising fuel prices are pushing more travelers to leave their private vehicles behind and opt for public transportation, with terminals such as the Parañaque Integrated Terminal Exchange (PITX) seeing a surge in passenger volume.

- [NLEX reports light traffic on Holy Wednesday amid travelers' exodus](#) (2026-04-01 10:53)

Light vehicular traffic was observed along the North Luzon Expressway (NLEX) on Wednesday evening, April 1 amid the exodus of travelers for the Holy Week break.

- [De Lima seeks expansion of PUV driver income program](#) (2026-04-01 10:46)

House Senior Deputy Minority Leader Leila de Lima on Wednesday called for the expansion of the service contracting program for the public transport sector, which provides drivers with a fixed income, amid continued increases in oil prices.

- [DepEd to roll out orientations for three-term school calendar](#) (2026-04-01 10:41)

DepEd to roll out orientations for three-term school calendar

- [China threatens 'measures' vs. PH renaming Kalayaan features in West PH Sea](#) (2026-04-01 10:34)

China accused the Philippines of breaking international law and threatened "measures" to protect its sovereignty after Manila said it would rename island features in the West PH Sea.

- [Philhealth: New payment policy for self-paying members starting April 1](#) (2026-04-01 09:47)

The Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (Philhealth) will implement a new payment policy for self-paying members starting April 1.

- [PH eyes 'deepening cooperation' with Iran on energy --DFA](#) (2026-04-01 09:06)

The Philippines is committed to "deepening cooperation" with Iran, the DFA said as the import-dependent nation jockeys with other countries for desperately needed oil.

- [Port travelers may be fewer than expected amid oil price effects --PPA](#) (2026-04-01 08:53)

The volume of passengers at the ports for Holy Week may not reach the projected 2.46 million due to the effect of the oil price hikes, the Philippine Ports Authority (PPA) said Wednesday.

- [DA assures stable fertilizer supply amid Middle East tensions](#) (2026-04-01 08:48)

Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. on Wednesday allayed concerns about the country's fertilizer supply, saying the Philippines maintains a secure supply chain despite the ongoing conflict in the Middle East.

- [Win Gatchalian pushes fuel rationing to extend PH fuel supply](#) (2026-04-01 08:06)

Sen. Sherwin Gatchalian has urged the Department of Energy (DOE) to explore the possibility of implementing a fuel rationing scheme amid tight global supply driven by heightened tensions in the Middle East.

- [Sandigan upholds denial of bail for 9 ex-DPWH execs in flood control mess case](#) (2026-04-01 08:05)

The Sandiganbayan has upheld its decision denying the bail petition of nine former Department of Public Works and Highways officials facing malversation charges in connection with the alleged substandard P289-million flood control project in Oriental Mindoro.

- [DepEd highlights reforms for teacher support, student achievements in SY 2025-2026](#) (2026-04-01 07:53)

The Department of Education marked the closing of School Year 2025-2026 by highlighting ongoing efforts to support teachers and improve learning outcomes while recognizing student achievements across the country.

- [BOC says negotiated sale of 2 Bugatti Chiron vehicles completed](#) (2026-04-01 07:35)

The Bureau of Customs (BOC) said Wednesday that it had successfully completed the negotiated sale of a 2017 blue Bugatti Chiron and a 2019 red Bugatti Chiron, which were seized in 2024.

- [DOE issues anti-hoarding rules amid nat'l energy emergency](#) (2026-04-01 07:35)

The Department of Energy (DOE) on Wednesday said it has issued new operating guidelines to curb the hoarding of petroleum products following the declaration of a State of National Energy Emergency (SNEE).

- [Quimbo: Gov't may tap loans to fund Bayanihan 3 amid price hikes](#) (2026-04-01 07:14)

Securing loans remains an option for the government in funding the proposed Bayanihan 3 measure, which aims to provide aid packages to the public amid rising oil prices, House ways and means panel chairman and Marikina 2nd District Rep. Miro Quimbo said on Wednesday.

- [PDEA: Some PUV drivers tested positive for drugs amid Holy Week exodus](#) (2026-04-01 06:52)

The Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency on Wednesday said some public utility vehicle drivers tested positive for illegal drugs in surprise screenings across the country amid the Holy Week exodus.

- [Dizon sees swift DOJ, Ombudsman action on flood control mess](#) (2026-04-01 05:21)

Public Works Secretary Vince Dizon on Wednesday expressed confidence that the Department of Justice (DOJ) and the Office of the Ombudsman will swiftly file cases against those behind the alleged flood control kickback scheme.

- [Accused in Camarines Sur child's letter to Marcos already detained -- PNP](#) (2026-04-01 05:01)

The accused who allegedly abused the girl who recently sought the help of President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. has been in detention since 2023, the Philippine National Police (PNP) said Wednesday.

- [DOLE prepares P1.2-B standby fund for income augmentation of public transpo drivers](#) (2026-04-01 04:21)

DOLE prepares P1.2-B standby fund for income augmentation of public transpo drivers

- [Experts call for vaccinations ahead of flu season](#) (2026-04-01 03:51)

Healthcare experts advised Filipinos to be on top of their flu vaccinations due to an anticipated rise in cases during the rainy season.

- [PNP unveils over 5,000 newly procured equipment, vehicles](#) (2026-04-01 02:45)

The Philippine National Police (PNP) on Wednesday presented more than 5,000 newly procured equipment including vehicles and operational gear to boost police visibility and response nationwide.

- [DOJ plantilla positions climb to almost 4k in 2026](#) (2026-04-01 02:31)

The plantilla positions in the Department of Justice have increased to almost 4,000 in 2026 to ensure the proper delivery of its services, Justice Secretary Fredderick Vida said.

- [Mandatory gov't support for children with autism pushed in House](#) (2026-04-01 02:06)

A bill providing mandatory government financial support to the private sector and non-government organizations for a comprehensive assistance for children diagnosed with autism, as well as their families and carers has been filed in the House of Representatives.

- [Filipino religious devotion: How traditions evolve with generational shifts](#) (2026-04-01 00:30)

Filipinos have long been known for their deep religious devotion, vividly expressed in Holy Week traditions--from the Pabasa and Senakulo to Visita Iglesia, culminating in the solemn commemoration of the Lord's Passion, Death, and Resurrection. Yet as a new generation

emerges and social media becomes ever more influential, questions arise: Do these traditions still hold the same meaning today? Or are Filipinos finding new ways to express their faith and devotion in a rapidly changing world?

- [Long lines, fully booked trips greet travelers on Holy Wednesday](#) (2026-04-01 00:29)

Long lines and fully booked trips were reported as travelers rushed to bus terminals, seaports, and airports on Holy Wednesday amid the Holy Week exodus.

- [LIVE UPDATES: Conflict in the Middle East \(April 1, 2026\)](#) (2026-03-31 22:55)

Here are the latest news and updates on the US-Israel war against Iran and related developments.

- [Understanding Visita Iglesia: Deciding between 7 or 14 church visits?](#) (2026-03-31 22:00)

Traditionally done during Maundy Thursday, Fr. Francis Gustilo, president of Don Bosco School of Theology in Parañaque City, said Visita Iglesia is a time for the faithful to keep vigil and welcome Jesus Christ.

- [DOJ gives visa relief for affected foreigners amid Middle East conflict](#) (2026-03-31 19:49)

Justice Secretary Fredderick Vida announced that he signed an order granting visa relief to foreigners whose outbound flights were cancelled amid the conflict in the Middle East.

- [LTFRB OKs bus company's 10% fare discount from Good Friday to Easter Sunday](#) (2026-03-31 17:57)

The Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB) has granted the request of a large bus company to grant a 10% discount to all passengers travelling from Good Friday to Easter Sunday.

- [LTFRB to PUV drivers: Keep calm, avoid road rage](#) (2026-03-31 16:58)

The Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB) on Tuesday reminded drivers of public utility vehicles (PUVs) to observe discipline and restraint as they journey to their destinations during the Holy Week.

- ['Angry' Marcos vows help for girl who bared local official's alleged abuses](#) (2026-03-31 16:29)

President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. has ordered the deployment of policemen to a community in Camarines Sur after reading the letter of an 11-year-old girl who detailed the alleged harassment that she and other children suffered at the hands of a barangay official.

- [Free, discounted bus rides soon, says DOTr](#) (2026-03-31 15:21)

Commuters could get some relief as the Department of Transportation (DOTr) will implement discounted fares or free rides in the coming weeks.

- [PCSO: No jackpot winner for major lotto draws, but bettor wins P5M in 6D Lotto](#) (2026-03-31 14:24)

A lucky bettor won the P5 million prize in the 6D Lotto draw of the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office (PCSO) on Tuesday, March 31.

- [Long queues at NAIA check-in counters amid Holy Week rush](#) (2026-03-31 14:08)

Long lines were observed at baggage check-in counters at Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA) Terminal 3 on Tuesday as passengers flocked to the airport for the Holy Week exodus.

- [Marcos mandates local names for 131 Kalayaan Island features in Palawan, WPS](#) (2026-03-31 13:53)

A total of 131 Kalayaan Island Group (KIG) features will have local names as President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. issued Executive Order No. 111, which aims to strengthen government control and sovereignty in Palawan and the West Philippine Sea (WPS).

- [ICI completes six-month probe into anomalous flood control projects](#) (2026-03-31 13:49)

The Independent Commission for Infrastructure (ICI) wrapped up its operations on Tuesday after six months of investigating the anomalies in the country's flood control projects.

- [PNP: Almost 100k cops deployed for Holy Week 2026 security](#) (2026-03-31 11:41)

The Philippine National Police (PNP) has deployed almost 100,000 personnel nationwide as part of its full alert measures to maintain peace and order during the country's observance of Holy Week.

- [Marcos: PH has 51-day oil supply amid Middle East conflict](#) (2026-03-31 10:37)

President Ferdinand “Bongbong” Marcos Jr. on Tuesday assured that the country has a 51-day oil supply as the government continues to secure fuel stocks amid the ongoing conflict in the Middle East.

- [BFP relieves NCR fire safety inspectors amid kickback claims](#) (2026-03-31 10:23)

The Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP) has relieved all fire safety inspectors (FSIs) in Metro Manila as part of its major reforms following allegations of kickbacks within the agency.

- [P611 million in cash, assets returned to DOJ in flood control probe](#) (2026-03-31 10:21)

Justice Secretary Frederick Vida said Tuesday the government recovered P611 million in cash and assets from state witnesses in its probe on anomalous flood control projects.

- [SEC files complaint vs 'Maharlika' group over 'Marcos gold' scam](#) (2026-03-31 10:09)

The Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) on Tuesday said it has filed a criminal complaint against the Royal Kingdom of Maharlika Pearl of the Orient Organization Inc. (RKOM) and its armed wing, Royal Vanguard Transnational Intelligence Group Inc., over an alleged investment scheme built on claims of the Marcos family's hidden wealth.

- [How to find more affordable tourist spots amid fuel price hikes, according to DOT](#) (2026-03-31 09:51)

As vacation season begins this summer, the Department of Tourism (DOT) on Tuesday advised budget-conscious travelers with alternatives and cost-saving tips for those planning trips amid surging fuel prices.

- [DOJ: Resolutions on plunder complaints vs Estrada, Revilla out by mid-April](#) (2026-03-31 09:49)

The Department of Justice (DOJ) will be releasing the resolutions on the plunder complaints against Senator Jinggoy Estrada and former Senator Ramon “Bong” Revilla by mid-April.

- [DOH staff file complaint vs. Herbosa, officials over alleged medicine, vaccine waste](#) (2026-03-31 09:14)

A group of Health department officials on Tuesday filed graft complaints against Health Secretary Ted Herbosa and 15 other DOH officials before the Office of the Ombudsman.

- [Imee Marcos sorry to Sara Duterte for pushing her to run for VP](#) (2026-03-31 08:53)

Senator Imee Marcos has apologized to Vice President Sara Duterte for supposedly causing her misfortune by encouraging her to run during the 2022 elections and allowing her to be subjected to “brutal” national politics.

- [PPA expects 2.46M Holy Week travelers amid no terminal fee hike](#) (2026-03-31 08:40)

The Philippine Ports Authority (PPA) is expecting passenger traffic to reach 2.46 million this Holy Week, a slight increase from last year, even as fuel prices remain elevated.

- [Palace responds to Imee Marcos apology to dad over rift with brother Bongbong](#) (2026-03-31 08:37)

Malacañang on Tuesday responded to Senator Imee Marcos' apology to her father, the late president Ferdinand Marcos Sr., over her rift with her brother, President Ferdinand 'Bongbong' Marcos Jr.

- [DOTr probes 8 bus firms over alleged illegal fare hikes](#) (2026-03-31 08:08)

At least eight bus companies are under investigation for allegedly imposing unauthorized fare increases, with transport authorities giving them 72 hours to explain before penalties are imposed, the Department of Transportation (DOTr) said Tuesday.

- [House eyeing Bayanihan 3, ayuda to prioritize transport sector --Rep. Miro Quimbo](#) (2026-03-31 07:37)

The House of Representatives is looking into having a comprehensive Bayanihan 3 measure, similar to the COVID-19 pandemic aid laws, to address the impact of rising oil prices, Representative Miro Quimbo said Tuesday.

- [MTRCB reminds PUVs: Show only 'G' and 'PG' content](#) (2026-03-31 07:24)

The Movie and Television Review and Classification Board (MTRCB) has ordered public utility vehicle (PUV) operators to show only “G” (General Patronage) and “PG” (Parental Guidance) films on their vehicles amid the expected surge of passengers during the Holy Week.

- [Ateneo suspends travel for students, staff amid global energy crisis](#) (2026-03-31 07:23)

Ateneo de Manila University has imposed temporary restrictions on international and domestic travel for its higher education community, citing ongoing disruptions linked to the global energy

crisis.

- [DTI eyes more talks with manufacturers to avoid price hikes after April 16](#) (2026-03-31 05:47)

The Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) is eyeing more discussions with manufacturers to prevent price increases of basic consumer goods even after April 16, Malacañang said Tuesday.

- [PNP cracks down on illegal fare hikes amid fuel price surge](#) (2026-03-31 05:07)

The Philippine National Police (PNP) has intensified operations against unauthorized fare increases, deploying personnel to assist transport regulators in monitoring public utility vehicles as fuel prices continue to rise.

- [Palace: Half day WFH for gov't workers on Holy Wednesday; afternoon off](#) (2026-03-31 04:05)

Malacañang on Tuesday announced that government employees will observe a half-day work-from-home (WFH) arrangement on April 1, Wednesday, in line with the Holy Week observance.

- [Marcos eyes talks with Iran for safe passage of PH-bound vessels in Strait of Hormuz](#) (2026-03-31 03:56)

President Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. wants high-level discussions with Iran to ensure the safe passage of Philippine-bound vessels through the Strait of Hormuz amid the Middle East conflict.

- [Holy Week 2026: DOTr logs more land passengers amid fuel price hikes](#) (2026-03-31 03:49)

The Department of Transportation (DOTr) reported Tuesday more travelers on public land transport on Holy Week 2026 compared to last year amid soaring fuel prices due to the Middle East crisis.

- [CLLEX Aliaga-Cabanatuan segment toll free until December --Marcos](#) (2026-03-31 03:13)

President Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. on Tuesday announced that the Aliaga-Cabanatuan segment of the Central Luzon Expressway would be toll free until December.

- [90 unauthorized Chinese vessels spotted in WPS in March 2026 --AFP](#) (2026-03-31 03:01)

At least 90 unauthorized Chinese vessels were monitored in the West Philippine Sea in March, the Armed Forces of the Philippines said Tuesday.

- [Marcos to spend Holy Week in Ilocos Norte](#) (2026-03-31 02:00)

President Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. said Tuesday that he would be spending the Holy Week in his hometown, Ilocos Norte.

- [Carpio warns PH-China joint oil, gas explorations in WPS could be a trap](#) (2026-03-31 01:27)

Retired Supreme Court Associate Justice Antonio Carpio has warned that the joint oil and gas explorations between the Philippines and China in the West Philippine Sea could be a trap.

- [LIVE UPDATES: Conflict in the Middle East \(March 31, 2026\)](#) (2026-03-30 23:13)

LIVE UPDATES: Conflict in the Middle East (March 31, 2026)

- [PNP: More than P2B in smuggled cigarettes seized in Q1 2026](#) (2026-03-30 19:55)

The Philippine National Police (PNP) has confiscated more than P2 billion worth of smuggled cigarettes from January 1 to March 29 of this year.

- [PNP: 740 personnel faced admin sanctions from Jan to March 2026](#) (2026-03-30 18:54)

The Philippine National Police (PNP) on Monday vowed to sternly enforce discipline and uphold integrity in its ranks amid President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.'s call for the PNP not to tolerate corruption and human rights abuses.

- [DSWD: 256k PUV drivers in Metro Manila received P1.28B cash aid](#) (2026-03-30 18:34)

The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) on Monday said it has distributed P1.28 billion in cash aid to more than 256,000 public utility vehicle (PUV) drivers in Metro Manila.

- [Senior citizen who won 6/58 jackpot waited 8 days before claiming P100M prize](#) (2026-03-30 17:14)

A senior citizen from Cebu City won the P100,331,631.91 jackpot prize in the Ultra Lotto 6/58 draw last March 17.

- [LTFRB summons 8 bus companies over alleged illegal fare hikes](#) (2026-03-30 16:14)

The Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB) has issued a show cause order (SCO) against eight bus companies for allegedly implementing fare increases without the government's approval.

- [PCSO: No jackpot winners for March 30 major lotto draws](#) (2026-03-30 14:29)

No one won the jackpot prizes in the major lotto draws of the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office (PCSO) on Monday, March 30.

- [SWS: Pinoys' personal well-being scores dipped to record low in Nov. 2025](#) (2026-03-30 14:08)

The Social Weather Stations on Monday reported a record low in the mean scores of adult Filipinos in the Anamnestic Comparative Self-Assessment (ACSA), a personal well-being indicator that includes the best and worst times in a person's life.

- [Lawyers group to file impeachment complaint vs. Comelec commissioners](#) (2026-03-30 12:25)

A group of lawyers urges the impeachment of the Comelec chairperson and commissioners, accusing them of betrayal of public trust, violation of the Constitution and other high crimes.

- [LTFRB: P651M in fuel subsidy given to transport workers so far](#) (2026-03-30 12:22)

Over P651 million in cash assistance has been distributed so far to drivers and operators of public utility vehicles as part of part of the government's fuel subsidy program amid rising pump prices due to the Middle East conflict, the Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB) said on Monday.

- [GMA News renews commitment to 'Serbisong Totoo'](#) (2026-03-30 12:03)

In a bold move to strengthen its legacy and sharpen its identity in an evolving media landscape, GMA News ushers in a renewed era this 2026, reaffirming its enduring commitment to its core mission: delivering truthful, balanced, and credible journalism to Filipinos around the world.

- [Iloilo City, San Fernando \(Pampanga\) among UN's 20 Cities Towards Zero Waste](#) (2026-03-30 11:29)

Iloilo City and San Fernando, Pampanga have been named among the United Nations' 20 Cities

Towards Zero Waste, recognizing local governments that have demonstrated ambitious and innovative approaches to reducing waste.

- [NTC targets uninterrupted communications for Holy Week 2026](#) (2026-03-30 11:03)

The National Telecommunications Commission (NTC) has mobilized nationwide public assistance operations as it targets reliable and uninterrupted communications during Holy Week.

- [GUIDE: Key PH government acronyms to know](#) (2026-03-30 10:30)

Government acronyms such as DepEd, DOH, and DPWH are frequently mentioned in news reports, school discussions, and public advisories.

- [Duterte supporters submit third batch of signatures to SC](#) (2026-03-30 10:25)

Senator Robin Padilla, along with other supporters of former President Rodrigo Duterte, on Monday submitted the third batch of their signature campaign to the Supreme Court (SC).

- [Imee Marcos apologizes to dad for rift with Bongbong](#) (2026-03-30 09:58)

Senator Imee Marcos is seeking forgiveness from her father, late president Ferdinand Marcos, for not being able to watch over her brother, President Ferdinand “Bongbong” Marcos Jr., whom she has had a falling-out with over issues on politics and alleged drug use.

- [DPWH ramps up road projects in Quezon, Davao ahead of Holy Week rush](#) (2026-03-30 09:27)

The Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) is accelerating key road projects in Luzon and Mindanao to ease travel and support local livelihoods ahead of the Holy Week exodus.

- [Palace: No PH interest will be lost in possible joint oil exploration with China](#) (2026-03-30 08:31)

Malacañang on Monday ensured that the government would protect the country's national interests in the possible joint oil and gas exploration with China amid present energy challenges.

- [Recto: Marcos wants gov't offices taking lead in energy saving measures](#) (2026-03-30 07:48)

Malacañang has rolled out energy austerity measures, directing all government agencies to

significantly reduce power and fuel consumption amid the recent oil price shocks brought by the Middle East tension.

- [MMDA notes leaner Holy Week travel amid rising oil prices](#) (2026-03-30 07:34)

The Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) said Monday it has observed a decline in passenger volume at terminals and along major thoroughfares, as rising fuel prices appear to have dampened this year's Holy Week exodus.

- [Angara to Class of 2026: 'Resilience will matter beyond the classroom'](#) (2026-03-30 07:21)

Education Secretary Sonny Angara on Monday urged graduating students to carry the resilience they built in school into the next stage of their lives, as nearly 48,000 public schools hold end-of-school-year (EOSY) rites nationwide.

- [SC junks Harry Roque's petition vs House QuadComm](#) (2026-03-30 07:08)

The Supreme Court (SC) has dismissed former presidential spokesperson Harry Roque's petition challenging his arrest during the House of Representatives' Quad Committee (QuadCom) investigation into alleged illegal Philippine offshore gaming operations (POGO) in 2024.

- [SC admits for review petition vs. Comelec ruling on Chiz campaign donation](#) (2026-03-30 06:39)

The Supreme Court has admitted for review a petition seeking to nullify a Commission on Elections department ruling that cleared Senator Francis “Chiz” Escudero in connection with a P30-million campaign donation from a contractor.

- [DSWD: 10,000 TNVS, motorcycle taxi riders miss P5,000 aid as firms withhold lists](#) (2026-03-30 06:27)

More than 10,000 motorcycle taxi and transport network vehicle service (TNVS) drivers failed to receive the government's P5,000 cash assistance after some ride-hailing companies did not fully submit their driver lists, the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) said on Monday.

- [Sara Duterte's SALNs as Davao City exec 'irrelevant' to impeachment -lawyer](#) (2026-03-30 06:04)

The Statements of Assets, Liabilities, and Networth (SALNs) of Vice President Sara Duterte

during her tenure as mayor and vice mayor in Davao City are not relevant to the ongoing impeachment proceedings, Atty. Michael Poa said Monday.

- [PAGCOR voids P310M in casino winnings of gov't officials in 2025](#) (2026-03-30 05:59)

The Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corporation (PAGCOR) has voided around P310 million in winnings of public officials from gaming venues in 2025, chairperson Alejandro Tengco said Monday.

- [7 cases filed vs hoarding, other violations amid rising fuel prices --PNP](#) (2026-03-30 05:35)

The Philippine National Police (PNP) has filed seven cases related to alleged fuel hoarding and other violations amid rising fuel prices due to the tensions in the Middle East.

- [PNP eyes posthumous awards for 5 cops killed in Maguindanao del Sur ambush](#) (2026-03-30 05:31)

Posthumous awards will be given to five police officers who were killed in an ambush in Maguindanao del Sur, the Philippine National Police said on Monday.

- [DOJ, PAGCOR sign pact to curb officials' presence in gambling venues](#) (2026-03-30 05:26)

The Department of Justice (DOJ) and its attached agencies signed an agreement with the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corporation (PAGCOR) to share employee information, in order to help prevent government workers from going to gambling venues.

- [Ex-Usecs. Bersamin, Olaivar face complaint over alleged flood control kickback](#) (2026-03-30 05:07)

Complaints for graft and violation of Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards for Public Officials complaints, among others, were filed Monday against former Presidential Legislative Liason Office undersecretary Adrian Bersamin and former Education undersecretary Trygve Olaivar for allegedly collecting money off anomalous flood control projects.

- [CAAP places airports on heightened alert for Holy Week](#) (2026-03-30 04:29)

The Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippines (CAAP) has placed all its operated airports on heightened alert, as it said it expects 550,000 passengers across all its operated airports during the Holy Week period.

- [PNP on heightened alert for Holy Week 2026](#) (2026-03-30 04:07)

The Philippine National Police (PNP) has placed its organization on heightened alert in anticipation of a surge in travelers during the Holy Week.

- [Sara Duterte's camp won't object if House has enough numbers to impeach VP](#) (2026-03-30 03:56)

The defense team of Vice President Sara Duterte will not oppose should the House of Representatives gather sufficient votes to impeach her and transmit the complaints to the Senate for the trial proper, Atty. Michael Poa said Monday.

- [DSWD keeps manual payout for PUV aid, cites verification issues](#) (2026-03-30 03:50)

The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) said it is prioritizing verification over speed in the rollout of cash assistance for public utility vehicle (PUV) drivers, explaining why payouts have yet to be fully digitized.

- [PNP: Closed gas stations due to rising fuel prices down to 365](#) (2026-03-30 03:34)

The Philippine National Police (PNP) on Monday said the number of gas stations that have temporarily closed amid rising fuel prices has gone down to 365.

- [MMDA allows provincial buses on EDSA for Holy Week 2026 exodus](#) (2026-03-30 03:16)

The Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) will temporarily allow provincial buses to use EDSA during the Holy Week period to accommodate the surge of passengers traveling to the provinces.

- [PITX: 8 bus operators reported to LTRFB over unauthorized fare hikes](#) (2026-03-30 02:56)

Eight bus operators have been reported to the Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTRFB) for allegedly increasing fares without approval, an official of the Parañaque Integrated Terminal Exchange (PITX) said Monday.

- [Sara Duterte underscores Middle East OFWs' sacrifices on Holy Week](#) (2026-03-30 02:43)

As Catholics observe this year's Holy Week, Vice President Sara Duterte underscored the sacrifices made by overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) in the Middle East amid the heightened tensions in the region.

- [Marcos says CAVITEX-C5 segment 3B toll free this April](#) (2026-03-30 02:01)

President Ferdinand “Bongbong” Marcos Jr. on Monday announced that the new CAVITEX-C5 segment would be toll free for travelers for the month of April.

- [Travelers face crowds, higher fares at terminals on Holy Monday](#) (2026-03-30 00:13)

A surge of passengers was observed flocking to ports, airports, and bus terminals on Holy Monday during the Holy Week exodus despite rising fuel prices and travel costs.

- [LIVE UPDATES: Conflict in the Middle East \(March 30, 2026\)](#) (2026-03-29 23:07)

Here are the latest news and updates regarding the US-Israel war against Iran and related developments.

- [BI to Holy Week travelers: Arrive at airports early, have docs ready](#) (2026-03-29 18:50)

Anticipating increased passenger traffic this Holy Week, the Bureau of Immigration (BI) on Sunday reminded travelers to arrive at the airport at least three hours before their flight and ensure that all travel documents are in order to avoid delays.

- [NAPOLCOM: Better disciplinary, investigative action vs corruption, abuses](#) (2026-03-29 17:49)

The National Police Commission (NAPOLCOM) on Sunday vowed to continue strengthening its disciplinary mechanisms and investigative processes in support of President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.'s order for the Philippine National Police (PNP) to enforce a zero tolerance policy against corruption and human rights abuses.

- [PCSO: 6/49 prize now at P151M with no jackpot prize winners in March 29 draws](#) (2026-03-29 14:11)

The prize for the Superlotto 6/49 has grown to over P151 million after no one won the jackpot in the major lotto draws of the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office (PCSO) on Sunday night, March 29.

- [Holy Week exodus underway amid higher fuel prices and fares, fewer trips](#) (2026-03-29 13:09)

Filipinos headed to the roads, the airports, the seaports and the bus terminals on Sunday for trips back their hometowns for Holy Week, amid rising fuel prices and trip cancellations.

- [China conducts patrol around Bajo de Masinloc](#) (2026-03-29 11:37)

China conducted naval, air and coast guard patrols around the Scarborough Shoal in the West Philippine Sea on Sunday, its military and Coast Guard said.

- [PCSO to deploy landing craft in Batanes to improve patient mobility](#) (2026-03-29 09:18)

The Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office (PCSO) announced a plan to provide a landing craft vessel (LCV) for Batanes to improve patient transport in the island province, with deployment scheduled later this year.

- [Ridon: SC likely to junk TRO bid vs VP Sara impeachment](#) (2026-03-29 09:07)

Bicol Saro party-list Rep. Terry Ridon on Sunday said he believes the Supreme Court will likely dismiss a petition seeking to stop the House of Representatives from proceeding with impeachment complaints against Vice President Sara Duterte.

- [Erwin Tulfo pushes for WFH setup in gov't, private workplaces amid oil crisis](#) (2026-03-29 08:52)

Senator Erwin Tulfo has raised the idea of bringing back work-from-home arrangements in both private and government offices amid rising oil prices.

- [Marcos orders smooth Holy Week travel amid Maharlika Highway repairs](#) (2026-03-29 08:32)

President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. has ordered authorities to ensure smooth and safe travel along the Maharlika Highway as thousands of Filipinos are expected to head to the provinces for the Holy Week break.

- [Bong Go seeks prayers for ex-ES Medialdea's recovery](#) (2026-03-29 07:36)

Senator Christopher “Bong” Go on Saturday sought prayers for Salvador Medialdea, who served as executive secretary to former president Rodrigo Duterte, after the former official was hospitalized.

- [PH saves 145.43 MW energy in Earth Hour 2026](#) (2026-03-29 06:54)

The Department of Energy (DOE) said Sunday the Philippines recorded a 145.43 megawatt reduction in electricity consumption during the observance of Earth Hour 2026.

- [DOLE looking into possible assistance for drivers via TUPAD program](#) (2026-03-29 06:46)

The Department of Labor and Employment is checking what assistance may be extended to public utility vehicle drivers affected by the rising cost of fuel as a result of the war in the Middle East, its spokesperson said Sunday.

- [Cardinal Advincula urges Catholics to surrender to God amid Holy Week](#) (2026-03-29 05:47)

Manila Archbishop Jose Cardinal Advincula on Sunday challenged the faithful to shift their perspective on surrender, as doing so to God is a form of redemption, not defeat.

- [Loan moratorium, penalty condonation being studied to ease economic burdens, says SSS](#) (2026-03-29 03:35)

The Social Security System (SSS) said Sunday that it is actively studying the feasibility of offering a loan moratorium for members and a condonation program for contribution penalties for employers as relief measures amid economic challenges.

- [PCG: 3 million passengers expected in seaports for Holy Week 2026](#) (2026-03-29 03:09)

The Philippine Coast Guard is operating around the clock in seaports across the country as about 3 million passengers are expected to travel for the Holy Week, spokesperson Commodore Noemi Cayabyab said Sunday.

- [Pulong Duterte, supporters celebrate Rodrigo Duterte's birthday in The Hague](#) (2026-03-29 02:44)

Davao City 1st District Representative Paolo “Pulong” Duterte joined supporters gathered outside the International Criminal Court Detention Center on Saturday to mark the 81st birthday of former President Rodrigo Duterte.

- [CAAP: Airports have enough fuel in case of power interruptions](#) (2026-03-29 01:59)

Airports under the Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippines have enough reserve fuel in case of power interruptions, CAAP spokesperson Eric Apolonio said Sunday amid the surging fuel prices due to the ongoing conflict in the Middle East.

- [Pinoy Catholics observe Palm Sunday, the start of Holy Week](#) (2026-03-29 00:59)

Filipino Catholics trooped to churches around the country to observe Palm Sunday, the start of the Holy Week.

Source: PhilStar Global

- [4 dead in Cotabato highway mishap](#) (2026-04-05 03:17)

Three Moro women and a child died from injuries when the truck they were riding, along with more than 20 others, flipped, rolled over and landed on its side at a stretch of a highway in Barangay San Mateo in Aleosan town in Cotabato province on Saturday, April 4.

- [Price Tracker: Oil, fuel monitor for Apr. 5](#) (2026-04-04 22:00)

Price Tracker lists the latest Metro Manila benchmark prices compiled from available reported figures.

- [Boy, 5, fights for life](#) (2026-04-04 16:00)

The five-year-old boy from Navotas who sustained deep slashes at the hands of a 20-year-old man on Tuesday is still inside the intensive care unit, police said.

- [BI arrests Chinese posing as Filipino](#) (2026-04-04 16:00)

A Chinese man who allegedly misrepresented himself as a Filipino and confirmed to have links with China's communist party was arrested at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA) Terminal 1 on Monday, the Bureau of Immigration said.

- [No special treatment for Revilla, DILG probe shows](#) (2026-04-04 16:00)

There is no special treatment being given to former senator Ramon Revilla Jr. at the Quezon city jail male dormitory, based on an investigation conducted by the Department of the Interior and Local Government.

- [Australian loses P7,000 at NAIA](#) (2026-04-04 16:00)

An Australian bound for Cebu complained to police that her P7,000 was stolen from her shoulder bag during table inspection at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA) Terminal 3 on Good Friday.

- [8 hurt in NAIA-1 ceiling collapse](#) (2026-04-04 16:00)

Eight people were injured after a portion of a ceiling panel at Ninoy Aquino International Airport Terminal 1 collapsed on Good Friday, the New NAIA Infra Corp. confirmed.

- [Man torches house; 1 dead, 3 injured](#) (2026-04-04 16:00)

A manhunt has been launched for a 31-year-old man who set their house on fire, killing his brother-in-law and wounding his three siblings in Janiuay, Iloilo on Thursday.

- [P30.78 million ketamine seized in Pampanga](#) (2026-04-04 16:00)

Up to six kilos of ketamine valued at P30.78 million have been seized at the port of Clark in Pampanga, according to the Bureau of Customs.

- [Cop denies Pulong' s arrest](#) (2026-04-04 16:00)

Police have denied allegations that Davao City Rep. Paolo “Pulong” Duterte has been arrested following an alleged raid on his property.

- [2 elderly activists nabbed in Iloilo](#) (2026-04-04 16:00)

Rights group Karapatan has denounced the arrest by police of two elderly activists in Pavia, Iloilo on Thursday.

- [Man attacks family; wife killed](#) (2026-04-04 16:00)

A woman was killed while her son was wounded after her husband allegedly attacked them with a knife in Angono, Rizal yesterday morning.

- [2 cops, BuCor employee dead in Palawan shootout](#) (2026-04-04 09:09)

Two policemen and an employee of the Bureau of Corrections died instantly in a shootout in Barangay Irawan in Puerto Princesa City in Palawan late Friday, April 3, reportedly triggered by an altercation over a mauling incident in the area.

- [Stepfather jailed for beating 4-year-old in Zamboanga City](#) (2026-04-04 07:42)

A stepfather landed in jail after beating his four-year-old stepson in Barangay Mampang in Zamboanga City on Friday, April 3.

- [Price Watch: Oil, fuel monitor for Apr. 4](#) (2026-04-03 22:00)

Prices remain elevated across Metro Manila despite assurances of safe oil shipments through the Strait of Hormuz.

- [P50 million worth of smuggled cigarettes seized in Maguindanao del Norte](#) (2026-04-03 09:40)

Police operatives seized no less than 50 million worth of cigarettes from Indonesia in an anti-smuggling operation in Datu Odin Sinsuat town in Maguindanao del Norte on Friday morning, April 3.

- [NEA urged to show transparency through concrete action](#) (2026-04-03 08:56)

The National Electrification Administration has been urged to back up its claims of transparency with concrete action following recent statements by Administrator Antonio Mariano Almeda.

- [Provincial leaders cite PDEA-BARMM' s operation feats in Tawi-Tawi](#) (2026-04-03 08:31)

The team of the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency in Tawi-Tawi had received two citations for having entrapped in recent months elusive local and foreign dealers together circulating shabu

in communities under their jurisdiction.

- [PNP, Army officials expand joint Maguindanao del Sur security operations](#) (2026-04-03 07:52)

The police and military shall expand cooperation in maintaining law and order in the troubled Shariff Aguak town in Maguindanao del Sur and nearby areas beset with security concerns that municipal officials can hardly address despite the powers vested in them by the Local Government Code.

- [Officials glad with high turnout of BARMM voters' listing](#) (2026-04-03 07:23)

Bangsamoro officials were elated with the high turnout of the registration of voters in the autonomous region in preparation for the first ever September 14, 2026 parliamentary elections in the five provinces and three cities in its core territory.

- [Partial ceiling in NAIA 1 collapses; 7 injured](#) (2026-04-03 06:48)

At least seven people were injured during the collapse of a partial ceiling at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport Terminal 1, the Department of Transportation (DOTr) said on Friday, April 3.

- [NCRPO: P4 million worth of drugs seized in 24-hour Holy Week ops](#) (2026-04-02 08:14)

In a statement on Thursday, April 2, the NCRPO said it arrested 72 individuals and seized 584.95 grams of shabu and 17.56 grams of kush from 6 a.m. on April 1 to 5:59 a.m. on April 2, 2026

- [Maundy Thursday weather: Easterlies to bring rain across Philippines](#) (2026-04-02 01:05)

Easterlies will bring isolated rainshowers and thunderstorms across most of the country on April 2, says PAGASA.

- [Lava fountaining detected in Mayon](#) (2026-04-01 16:00)

Several lava fountaining activities have been recorded at Mayon Volcano in Albay, according to the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology.

- [SUV rams 4 vehicles; 6 injured](#) (2026-04-01 16:00)

Six people were injured when a sport utility vehicle (SUV) rammed a tricycle, a motorcycle and two cars in San Jose del Monte, Bulacan on Tuesday night.

- [Bulacan shrine cancels procession to help save fuel](#) (2026-04-01 16:00)

The Diocesan Shrine and Parish of San Isidro Labrador in Pulilan, Bulacan will cancel its traditional procession today to avoid creating traffic and help motorists save fuel.

- [Baguio logs 50% drop in tourist arrival](#) (2026-04-01 16:00)

The number of people visiting Baguio has decreased by 50 percent, which city officials attributed to surging fuel prices.

- [BBC: El Nidamong world's best beach escapes](#) (2026-04-01 16:00)

El Nido in Palawan has been named one of eight best beach escapes in the world by the London-based news organization BBC.

- [P300,000 offered for info on suspects in Maguindanao ambush](#) (2026-04-01 16:00)

The governor of Maguindanao del Sur has offered a reward of P300,000 in exchange for information that may lead to the arrest of the gunmen who ambushed and killed five policemen in Shariff Aguak town on Saturday.

- [PCSO: Lotto games resume on Sunday](#) (2026-04-01 16:00)

Lotto and other digit games are suspended today until Saturday in observance of Holy Week, the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office said yesterday.

- [P38.6 million shabu intercepted at NAIA](#) (2026-04-01 16:00)

Shabu with a street value of P38.6 million was intercepted at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport on Tuesday.

- [Marikina shoulders 8,000 public school graduates](#) (2026-04-01 16:00)

To ease the financial burden on families amid the energy crisis, the Marikina government will shoulder all graduation expenses of around 8,000 public school students in the city.

- [8 PITX bus operators revert fares](#) (2026-04-01 16:00)

Unauthorized fare hikes have been rolled back by eight bus operators at the Parañaque Integrated Terminal Exchange.

- [Baguio tourism suffers 50-percent decline](#) (2026-04-01 09:48)

Tourist arrivals to this mountain city may have declined by as much as 40–50% amid rising fuel prices, Mayor Benjamin Magalong confirmed, with the slowdown weighing on the local hospitality sector.

- [Trafficker wounded, P3.4-M worth of shabu seized in PDEA 9 operation](#) (2026-04-01 09:38)

Anti-narcotics agents seized P3.4 million worth of shabu from two traffickers, one wounded in a shootout, during an entrapment operation late Tuesday, March 31, in Ipil, Zamboanga Sibugay, which went haywire.

- [2 bomb blasts trigger panic in a Maguindanao del Sur town](#) (2026-04-01 09:09)

Two explosions, one in a residential area and the other targeting a vehicle carrying policemen, ripped through a town in Maguindanao del Sur on Wednesday morning, April 1, causing panic

among villagers

- [Marcos deploys cops after child's letter exposes alleged rape by CamSur official](#) (2026-04-01 07:04)

Authorities said a rape case cited in the letter is already in court.

- [P300,000 reward offered for identities of Bangsamoro cops' ambushers](#) (2026-04-01 03:20)

The governor of Maguindanao del Sur has offered P300,000 cash in exchange for information that could lead to the arrest of the gunmen behind the fatal ambush of five policemen in Shariff Aguak town on Saturday night, March 28.

- [Soldiers seize hidden NPA combat weapons](#) (2026-04-01 01:11)

Soldiers seized in separate operations combat rifles that New People's Army guerrillas covered with soil and dry forest tree leaves in hinterlands in San Miguel and Marihatag towns in Surigao del Sur before retreating to areas far from reach by pursuing military forces.

- [Go calls for prayer, unity on Duterte's 81st birthday](#) (2026-03-31 16:00)

Sen. Bong Go urged Filipinos to remain united and continue praying for former president Rodrigo Duterte during the celebration of the latter's 81st birthday in Davao City on Saturday.

- [3 drown in irrigation canal](#) (2026-03-31 16:00)

A farmer and two security guards drowned in an irrigation canal in the Science City of Muñoz in this province on Monday.

- [Gunmen attack boat off Sulu; 3 dead](#) (2026-03-31 16:00)

Three people were killed while two others were wounded when unidentified men opened fire at a speedboat that was sailing in the waters off Sulu on Monday night.

- [Bacolod expands conversion of used cooking oil into biofuel](#) (2026-03-31 16:00)

To address surging fuel prices, Bacolod Rep. Alfredo Abelardo Benitez is expanding an initiative involving the conversion of used cooking oil into biofuel, which will be sold to small-scale fishermen.

- [New CLLEX segment opened to motorists](#) (2026-03-31 16:00)

President Marcos yesterday opened a new segment of the Central Luzon Link Expressway in Aliaga, Nueva Ecija, which is expected to cut travel time between Tarlac and Cabanatuan City from 1.5 hours to just 20 minutes.

- [2 ex-DPWH officials convicted over ROW payments](#) (2026-03-31 16:00)

The Sandiganbayan has convicted two former officials of the Department of Public Works and Highways based in Soccsksargen, in connection with spurious payments for the right-of-way of government projects in South Cotabato.

- [Corruption pulls down Manila in Smart Cities](#) (2026-03-31 16:00)

Amid persistent corruption concerns, Manila's ranking dropped in the latest Smart City Index of Switzerland-based Institute for Management Development's World Competitiveness Center.

- [Driver yields after fleeing with unpaid P5,000 fuel](#) (2026-03-31 16:00)

A transport network vehicle service driver who left a Quezon City gasoline station with unpaid fuel of more than P5,000 has surrendered to police.

- [Stranded foreigners' visa Extended](#) (2026-03-31 16:00)

The DOJ ordered the Bureau of Immigration to extend the visa relief, removing payment of fees, fines and penalties.

- [902 BFP inspectors axed](#) (2026-03-31 16:00)

Over 900 Bureau of Fire Protection personnel in Metro Manila were relieved from their posts yesterday as part of an internal cleansing to rid the BFP of corruption.

- [Farm worker found dead in General Santos City](#) (2026-03-31 10:45)

Policemen are searching for a farm worker who killed a drinking buddy in Barangay Katangawan in General Santos City late Monday, March 30.

- [Manila raises aid for jeepney drivers to P3,500](#) (2026-03-31 06:27)

The Manila local government increased the assistance to jeepney drivers who conduct "libreng sakay" to P3,500.

- [Meralco: Reports of 3-month brownouts not true](#) (2026-03-31 05:08)

Manila Electric Co. debunked circulating claims about supposed prolonged power outages, warning the public against the spread of false information online.

- [Price Watch: Diesel up P12 per liter as oil firms impose new hikes](#) (2026-03-30 23:00)

Diesel prices rise by over P12 per liter as oil firms implement new hikes.

- [11,100 cops to secure Calabarzon, Mimaropa](#) (2026-03-30 16:00)

Around 11,100 police personnel and force multipliers have been deployed to ensure the safety of travelers and motorists this Holy Week across the Calabarzon and Mimaropa regions.

- [P9.5 million shabu seized in Lucena, Zamboanga stings](#) (2026-03-30 16:00)

Police operatives seized P6.1 million worth of shabu in Lucena City on Sunday and another P3.4 million worth in Zamboanga City yesterday, authorities said.

- [PNP probes lapses in Maguindanao ambush](#) (2026-03-30 16:00)

The Philippine National Police is investigating possible administrative lapses on the part of the Maguindanao del Sur provincial PNP chief after Saturday night's ambush in Shariff Aguak that left five policemen dead and three others wounded.

- [DOJ workers' data sent to PAGCOR](#) (2026-03-30 16:00)

Enforcing the gambling ban on state officials and employees, the Department of Justice will submit the data of DOJ personnel to the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp.

- [LTFRB: P651 million released for fuel subsidy](#) (2026-03-30 16:00)

The Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board has released over P651 million in fuel subsidies to public utility vehicle drivers affected by the energy crisis.

- [Point-to-point carpooling in MetroManila eyed](#) (2026-03-30 16:00)

The Metropolitan Manila Development Authority yesterday proposed a point-to-point and time-restricted carpooling after the Lenten break.

- [44 airports on Holy Week alert](#) (2026-03-30 16:00)

Forty-four airports operated by the Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippines are on heightened alert as passenger traffic is expected to surge during Holy Week.

- [Police corporal, companion killed in Lanao del Sur ambush](#) (2026-03-30 10:36)

Gunmen killed a police corporal and his male civilian companion in an ambush in Barangay Paglamatan, Saguiaran, Lanao del Sur, before dawn on Saturday, March 28.

- [Special probe group formed for ambush of BARMM cops](#) (2026-03-30 10:28)

Police in the Bangsamoro region have organized a special group to probe the fatal ambush of five patrolmen in an attack on Saturday night, March 28, in Barangay Mother Poblacion, Shariff Aguak, Maguindanao del Sur.

- [WATCH: Inside Metro Manila Subway's Camp Aguinaldo station](#) (2026-03-30 07:31)

Philstar.com was among those given access to the site, where excavation and structural works are progressing.

- [Fuel supply issues shut more than 300 gas stations](#) (2026-03-30 07:11)

Fuel supply disruptions force hundreds of gas stations to close nationwide.

- [New CAVITEX link seen to cut Taguig-Parañaque travel to 15 minutes](#) (2026-03-30 04:26)

A new CAVITEX segment is expected to cut travel time between Taguig and Parañaque to just 15 minutes.

- [500 Bilibid inmates transferred to Palawan's Iwahig facility](#) (2026-03-30 03:25)

The Bureau of Corrections has transferred 500 inmates to a Palawan penal facility.

- [Fishing boats have sat idle since fuel price spikes](#) (2026-03-30 02:56)

Small fisherfolk have halted operations as diesel prices surge, with groups warning of rising production costs.

- [Price Watch: Oil, fuel monitor for Mar. 30](#) (2026-03-29 23:45)

Pump prices differ sharply across Metro Manila as oil volatility continues.

- [Free trike rides in Caloocan set](#) (2026-03-29 16:00)

Free tricycle rides in Caloocan City will start on April 6 amid the impact of soaring fuel prices on commuters and the transport sector.

- [San Juan flagship programs cited](#) (2026-03-29 16:00)

San Juan Mayor Francis Zamora highlighted his administration's flagship housing, health care and education programs during his State of the City Address on Friday.

- [Stronger mental health programs sought](#) (2026-03-29 16:00)

Prompted by an alarming surge in suicide cases in Metro Manila, Sen. Sherwin Gatchalian is calling for the immediate and intensified rollout of comprehensive mental health programs to protect vulnerable Filipinos.

- [40 Celsius heat index seen](#) (2026-03-29 16:00)

Four areas in the country are expected to experience heat indices of 40 degrees Celsius and above, according to the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration.

- [Boy, 8, hurt in grenade attack near airbase](#) (2026-03-29 16:00)

An eight-year-old boy was wounded and a taxi was damaged when a disgruntled laborer and his uncle fired a shotgun and lobbed a grenade near Lumbia Airbase here on Saturday evening.

- [CHED to build P159.8 million Zamboanga dormitory](#) (2026-03-29 16:00)

The Commission on Higher Education will build a P159.8-million, six-story dormitory to provide students in Zamboanga accommodation while they complete their studies, the CHED said.

- [Pag-asa Island breaks ground for first Catholic church](#) (2026-03-29 16:00)

A Catholic chapel will open on Pag-asa Island in the West Philippine Sea (WPS), with Puerto Princesa Bishop Socrates Mesiona leading the groundbreaking ceremony over the weekend.

- [President Marcos declares local holidays](#) (2026-03-29 16:00)

President Marcos has declared special non-working days in five municipalities and one province to allow residents to fully participate in the celebration of their founding anniversaries in April.

- [5 cops killed, 3 wounded in Maguindanao Sur ambush](#) (2026-03-29 16:00)

Five policemen were killed while three others were wounded in an ambush in Barangay Mother Poblacion on Saturday night, the Philippine National Police said.

- [NNIC sees 1.35 million Holy Week travelers](#) (2026-03-29 16:00)

Over 1.35 million passengers are expected at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport during Holy Week, according to the New NAIA Infra Corp.

- [3 shabu dealers linked to Dawlah terror group remnants arrested](#) (2026-03-29 09:20)

Agents of the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency arrested three more shabu peddlers, who were remitting earnings to remnants of the now-defunct Dawlah Islamiya terror group, in an entrapment operation in Barangay Poblacion, Datu Paglas, Maguindanao del Sur, on Friday, March 27.

- [P11.7M unregistered cooking oil seized in Benguet capital](#) (2026-03-29 07:21)

Authorities seized about P11.7 million worth of unregistered cooking oil and apprehended four men during a raid in Puguis, La Trinidad, Benguet, on Thursday, March 26.

- [Nationwide communications support activated for Holy Week](#) (2026-03-29 07:00)

The National Telecommunications Commission (NTC) has mobilized nationwide public assistance operations to ensure reliable and uninterrupted communications during the Holy Week observance.

- [Aetas benefit from multi-phase outreach program by reservists, PAF](#) (2026-03-29 04:00)

Nearly 300 Aeta-Indigenous Peoples (IPs) received more than what they wished for during the multi-phase outreach program organized recently by Association of the Reservists and Reservist Administrators of the Philippines Inc.

- [5 cops killed, 3 wounded in Maguindanao del Sur ambush](#) (2026-03-29 03:34)

Five policemen were killed, while three others were wounded in an ambush in Barangay Mother Poblacion in Shariff Aguak, Maguindanao del Sur on Saturday night, March 28.

Source: Philippine Daily Inquirer

- [Calapan residents told to take extreme caution as heat index reaches 41°C](#) (2026-04-05 13:37)

CALAPAN CITY, Oriental Mindoro — The City Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Department (CDRRMD) has issued a warning as the heat index in Calapan City in Oriental Mindoro reached a scorching 41 degrees Celsius on Saturday morning, April 4. The situation prompted local authorities to advise residents to take “extreme caution.” The reading, recorded at

- [Palace to pursue cases vs ‘energy lockdown’ fake news spreaders](#) (2026-04-05 13:28)

MANILA, Philippines — Malacañang will pursue legal action against persons who maliciously spread fake news about the government supposedly imposing lockdowns due to fuel supply problems and the newest variant of COVID-19. “In light of the current energy landscape, we warn anyone who deliberately fabricates stories and spreads fake news online to exploit the situation that

- [Trekking at Mt. Kabunian in Benguet suspended after grass fire](#) (2026-04-05 13:22)

BAGUIO CITY — Trekking and other activities at Mt. Kabunian in Bakun, Benguet have been temporarily suspended following a grass fire that struck the mountain on April 2 (Holy Thursday). The Bakun Municipal Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council reported that the blaze, which spread from the summit to the base, prompted the rescue of

- [Discovery of ₱22-M suspected shabu at sea prompts PNP to shore up patrol](#) (2026-04-05 11:37)

MANILA, Philippines — A fisherman’s discovery of ₱22.3 million worth of suspected shabu (crystal meth) floating near a remote island village in Patnanungan, Quezon has raised the alert of the Philippine National Police in the coastlines. On Good Friday, 3.28 kilograms of suspected shabu was found drifting at sea. The haul was turned over to

- [Holy Week crowds in Zambales coastal town swell to about 40,000](#) (2026-04-05 11:05)

SAN ANTONIO, Zambales — More than 40,000 tourists visited this coastal town during Holy Week, according to data released by the municipal tourism office on Sunday (April 5). Data showed that the majority of visitors flocked to the beaches in Barangays Pundaquit and San Miguel. As of Black Saturday, 28,657 tourists were recorded in Barangay

- [4 dead, 29 hurt in Cotabato highway mishap on Black Saturday](#) (2026-04-05 10:53)

COTABATO CITY — Four persons were killed and at least 29 were injured in a highway accident in Aleosan town, Cotabato province on Black Saturday, April 4. Citing the account of witnesses, police investigators said the tragedy occurred at around 3 p.m. along the national highway in Barangay San Mateo, Aleosan. According to authorities, an

- [PNP stays on full alert as Holy Week ends](#) (2026-04-05 10:17)

MANILA, Philippines — With the Holy Week break coming to an end, the Philippine National Police (PNP) will still be on full alert in transport hubs for travelers who are returning from places where they spent the holidays. In a statement on Sunday, PNP chief PGen Jose Melencio C. Nartatez, Jr. said the police' s work

- [SuperCat imposes 10% fuel surcharge on fares of its Visayas-bound boats](#) (2026-04-05 10:16)

TACLOBAN CITY — Passengers traveling across key islands in Visayas will soon face higher ferry fares after SuperCat Fast Ferry Corporation announced a 10 percent fuel surcharge set to take effect on April 8. In a public advisory, the company said the move comes in response to continued increases in global oil prices, partly driven

- [Zambales devotees gather for traditional 'Salubong' on Easter Sunday](#) (2026-04-05 09:38)

SAN ANTONIO, Zambales — Even before the first light of Easter Sunday broke, residents gathered outside churches here to witness one of the most cherished traditions of the Lenten season—the Salubong (Encounter). The ritual is a symbolic reenactment of the meeting between the Risen Christ and His mother, the Blessed Virgin Mary, marking the joyful

- [Oplan Harabas goes on in Iloilo; surprise drug tests snare 2 drivers](#) (2026-04-05 07:35)

ILOILO CITY — Two taxi drivers tested positive for illegal drugs during the second day of the 'Oplan Harabas' surprise drug tests for drivers and conductors held in six public transport terminals in Iloilo and Guimaras on Tuesday. Oplan Harabas was launched by the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency in Western Visayas (PDEA-6) to make travel during

- [Cloudy Easter Sunday forecast across PH](#) (2026-04-05 07:30)

MANILA, Philippines — Partly cloudy to cloudy skies are expected to prevail in Metro Manila and the rest of the country on Sunday, the state weather bureau predicted. In its 5 a.m. bulletin, the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical, and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) weather specialist Veronica Torres said Luzon will have partly cloudy atmosphere. She also

- [NIA eyes conversion of 7 irrigation systems to solar power in Bicol](#) (2026-04-05 07:20)

LEGAZPI CITY — The National Irrigation Administration in Bicol (NIA-5) is targeting the conversion of seven fuel-powered irrigation systems into solar-powered facilities. In a phone interview on Wednesday, Ma. Cleofe Baraero, NIA-Bicol spokesperson, said the seven irrigation systems are in the provinces of Albay, Camarines Sur, Masbate, Sorsogon and Camarines Norte. "The project has an allocated

- [Marcos urges Filipinos to 'rise with renewed purpose' on Easter Sunday](#) (2026-04-05 06:00)

MANILA, Philippines — President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. called on Filipinos to rise with “renewed purpose” and a “deep sense of responsibility for one another” as the nation marks Easter Sunday. In his message, Marcos said Easter Sunday symbolizes renewal and hope, urging the public to translate faith into action for the good of others.

- [No price drop soon despite Hormuz pass for PH-bound oil](#) (2026-04-05 05:37)

MANILA, Philippines — Despite Iran’s promise to allow safe passage for Philippine-bound oil through the Strait of Hormuz, it is unlikely that fuel prices at the pump would soon come down from where they have risen since the Middle East conflict erupted on Feb. 28, petroleum industry sources said on Saturday. Manila obtained Tehran’s assurance

- [Due to fuel crisis, farming town drops carabao from fiesta menu](#) (2026-04-05 05:35)

SULAT, Eastern Samar — The latest conflict in the Middle East may be raging thousands of miles away, but its impact is being keenly felt even in this coastal, fourth-class municipality, where the people will not be having local carabao meat for their fiesta celebrations this year. Sulat Mayor Javier Zacate issued on March 31

- [Who should answer for Naia ceiling collapse?](#) (2026-04-05 05:33)

MANILA, Philippines — The collapse of a portion of the ceiling at Ninoy Aquino International Airport (Naia) Terminal 1 over the Holy Week raises questions whether the private consortium managing the airport has been up to the task of maintaining its facilities, according to a lawmaker. Bicol Saro Rep. Terry Ridon said the incident, which

- [Faith-based rehabilitation eyed to improve inmates’ conduct](#) (2026-04-05 05:31)

MANILA, Philippines — The Bureau of Corrections (BuCor) on Saturday said it is stepping up efforts to expand faith-based rehabilitation programs, saying these initiatives could help reduce violence among inmates and support their reintegration into society. BuCor Director General Gregorio Pio Catapang Jr. cited research presented at an international conference, which showed that inmates who

- [Lockdown claims fake — DOH, DOE](#) (2026-04-05 05:29)

MANILA, Philippines — With most national newspapers on their annual Good Friday break, purveyors of fake news managed to get free passes to disinform the public, falsely claiming “lockdowns” in the public health and energy sectors. READ: DOH: Emergency lockdown due to Covid-19 variant ‘fake’ The first victim was the Department of Health (DOH) which

- [PNP: Good Friday ‘generally peaceful’](#) (2026-04-05 05:27)

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippine National Police on Saturday said the nationwide observance of Good Friday was generally peaceful, except for a number of drownings and the entrapment of 18 hikers in a grass fire in Bakun, Benguet. But PNP chief Gen. Jose Melencio Nartatez Jr. warned the public to continue to take precautions as

- [CA affirms dentist' s conviction for molesting teen patient](#) (2026-04-05 05:25)

MANILA, Philippines — The Court of Appeals (CA) has affirmed the conviction of a Makati-based dentist who molested his teenage patient, saying that the victims' tendency to isolate and keep problems to themselves does not undermine their credibility in such cases. In a 24-page decision promulgated on March 30, the appellate court' s First Division agreed

- [Thirst ends, hope begins on Zamboanga island](#) (2026-04-05 05:17)

ZAMBOANGA CITY — Before, mornings on the remote Tumulutab Island began with waiting. Not the ordinary kind, but the kind that shaped an entire day — when families stepped out of their homes at first light carrying empty plastic containers, when children lingered by the doorway hoping for water before school, and when mothers walked

- [This week' s milestones: April 5 to April 11](#) (2026-04-05 05:15)

April 6, 1993 The Generoso Reyes Gamboa Ancestral House in Silay City, Negros Occidental, was declared a heritage house by the National Historical Institute under Board Resolution No. 3, s. 1993. The houses were built by Generoso Yuzon Gamboa, then mayor of Silay, during the early American Period. Identical in design and connected by a

- [Uneven supply, demand drive fluctuating seafood prices in Iloilo market](#) (2026-04-05 03:56)

ILOILO CITY — An imbalance in supply and demand across key fishery products led to fluctuating seafood prices at the Iloilo Central Market during the Holy Week, according to the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) Region 6. BFAR data covering the March 30 to April 3 monitoring period showed that prices varied widely

- [Newly freed inmate arrested for robbery, attempted homicide](#) (2026-04-05 03:39)

CAMP GEN. ALEJO SANTOS, Bulacan — Police arrested a recently freed inmate after he allegedly shot a man whom he tried to rob on Maundy Thursday in San Miguel town. Police identified the suspect as “Lon,” 47, who was arrested in a cemetery in Barangay Sta. Rita Bata during a police hot pursuit operation at

- [LOOK: Devotees hold Easter vigil in Iloilo City](#) (2026-04-05 03:19)

ILOILO CITY, Philippines — Catholic devotees fill the pews and aisles of St. Clement' s Church in La Paz, Iloilo City on Black Saturday for the Easter Vigil. At 8 p.m., Redemptorist priest Neil Bryan Lesaca celebrated the Easter Vigil Mass. The vigil is the most important liturgy of the year, bringing the penitential season of

- [Boracay welcomes 1,500 Chinese tourists aboard luxury cruise ship](#) (2026-04-04 23:17)

ILOILO CITY — Around 1,500 Chinese tourists and nearly 800 crew members arrived in Boracay on Saturday morning aboard the luxury cruise ship MS Adora Mediterranea, marking its maiden

call to the island, according to a news release from the Malay-Boracay Tourism Office. The vessel, which came from Xiamen, China, dropped anchor at about 8

- [Coast Guard tightens watch in Occidental Mindoro](#) (2026-04-04 23:00)

CALAPAN CITY, ORIENTAL MINDORO — The Coast Guard Station Occidental Mindoro (CGSOM) intensified security operations across the province, deploying personnel to key tourist areas and conducting seaborne patrols to prevent accidents during the Holy Week break as people head to the beaches for Easter Sunday. In a statement, CGSOM said its units, together with sub-stations,

- [Mayor of Infanta, Quezon fumes over littering tourists](#) (2026-04-04 22:48)

LUCENA CITY, Quezon — The mayor of Infanta town in Quezon province has warned tourists and other visitors against littering in the locality. In a Facebook post on Saturday, April 4, Mayor Lord Arnel Ruanto issued a stern reminder written in Filipino: “To undisciplined tourists in Infanta: We will declare you persona non grata, and

- [Easter Vigil in Valencia, Bukidnon marks hope, renewal](#) (2026-04-04 22:35)

VALENCIA CITY, Bukidnon — Catholic parishioners spent hours in solemn observance on Black Saturday as churches marked the Easter Vigil, a key observance symbolizing the transition from darkness to light and death to life. At St. Bernadette Parish in Batangan village here, Rev. Fr. Jojo Sumastre led the rites, beginning with the “Service of Light,”

- [Heavy passenger traffic seen at Oriental Mindoro seaports](#) (2026-04-04 22:22)

CALAPAN CITY, Oriental Mindoro — The seaports across the province of Oriental Mindoro have been experiencing heavy passenger traffic in the last three days, the peak of Holy Week travel. As of 9:30 a.m. on Saturday, a total of 31,602 inbound passengers and 11,590 outbound passengers were recorded across major ports, along with thousands of

- [Zambales resort town draws over 10,000 Holy Week tourists](#) (2026-04-04 21:59)

SAN ANTONIO, Zambales — Resort owners in San Felipe, Zambales, known for surfing and its laid-back coastal atmosphere, have so far reported more than 10,000 tourists as of Black Saturday, based on partial data submitted to local tourism authorities. The municipal tourism office said it is still consolidating reports from resort owners to determine the

- [3 arrested in Bulacan for stealing electric cables](#) (2026-04-04 21:51)

CAMP GEN. ALEJO SANTOS, Bulacan—Three persons were arrested on Friday for stealing P6,000 worth of electrical cables in Meycauayan City. Col. Melvin Florida Jr., Meycauayan City police chief, identified the arrested suspects only as “Dav,” 28, “Nald” , 22 and “Inio” , 37, from Quezon City and Caloocan City. A security guard in a warehouse near LP

- [2 brothers drown in Bataan on Black Saturday](#) (2026-04-04 21:27)

BALANGA CITY, Bataan- Two teenaged brothers, aged 18 and 17 drowned in a beach in Poblacion, Morong, Bataan on Black Saturday. Bataan police identified the fatalities as Aries Oraje, 18, and his brother Christian, 17, both of Valenzuela City. Local authorities said Philippine National Police – Maritime Group personnel tried to save the victims and

- [Packs of suspected shabu found in Quezon island town coastline](#) (2026-04-04 20:30)

LUCENA CITY, Quezon— Three plastic bags containing some 3.28 kilograms of a white crystalline substance were found along the coast of Patnanungan Island in Quezon province on Good Friday. In a report on Saturday, the Quezon police said a 58-year-old man identified only as “Felipe” found the items while having a picnic with his family

- [4 nabbed for illegal cockfights in Occidental Mindoro](#) (2026-04-04 20:22)

CALAPAN CITY, ORIENTAL MINDORO — Police arrested four individuals while one suspect remains at large following two separate operations on Good Friday against illegal cockfighting, locally known as “tupada.” The Occidental Mindoro Police Provincial Office said operatives carried out back-to-back anti-illegal gambling operations in the towns of San Jose and Sta. Cruz, resulting in the

- [Manila archbishop Advincula calls for end to war in Easter message](#) (2026-04-04 20:17)

MANILA, Philippines — The Archbishop of Manila, Jose F. Cardinal Advincula, called for an end to ongoing conflicts worldwide in his Easter Sunday message, urging the faithful to embrace the Resurrection of Jesus as a source of hope and action amid suffering. “Christ is risen, alleluia! We celebrate Easter this year in a time of

- [Magnitude 5.9 earthquake strikes off Davao Occidental](#) (2026-04-04 20:12)

DAVAO CITY – A magnitude 5.9 earthquake struck off the coast of Davao Occidental at 6:34 p.m. on Saturday, the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs) said. The earthquake’s epicenter was traced 59 kilometers southeast of the island town of Sarangani and had a depth of 10 kilometers. The quake was felt at

- [Eastern Visayas police recruits reenact Stations of the Cross](#) (2026-04-04 20:03)

TACLOBAN CITY — In the midst of their demanding training, police recruits in Eastern Visayas set aside drills and discipline to take part in a solemn act of faith, reminding themselves that service is not only about strength—but also about character. On Good Friday, trainees of the Public Safety Basic Recruit Course (PSBRC) Batch 2025-01

- [Coast Guard rescues intoxicated, stranded traveler in Lucena City](#) (2026-04-04 19:56)

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) on Good Friday rescued an intoxicated man spotted near the breakwater area of the Philippine Ports Authority in Barangay Talao-Talao, Lucena City. The man was quickly brought back to the shore and was identified as a resident of Barangay Casian, Taytay, Palawan. He was found under the

- [Pangilinan warns vs Holy Week profiteering, hoarding](#) (2026-04-04 19:35)

MANILA, Philippines — As Filipinos observe Holy Week and the nation grapples with a fuel crises, Senator Francis Pangilinan on Good Friday warned traders and retailers against profiteering and hoarding amid rising prices. Pangilinan, who is also the chairman of the Senate committee on agriculture, food and agrarian reform, said the Holy Week is “a

- [Deeper probe into Good Friday shooting in Puerto Princesa ordered](#) (2026-04-04 19:06)

PUERTO PRINCESA CITY, Palawan – A more thorough probe into the shooting incident on Good Friday in Puerto Princesa the resulted in the death of two police officers and a jail employee was ordered by Mimaropa regional police chief Brig. Gen. Jovencio Badua Jr. Authorities are currently conducting a follow-up investigation on the incident in

- [LOOK: Holy Week 2026 rites in Iloilo City](#) (2026-04-04 18:53)

ILOILO CITY — The city government raised its emergency response to blue alert status for Holy Week as thousands of devotees and travelers flock to churches, ports, and terminals to observe, commemoratre and take part in Holy Week rites and traditions, local authorities said. In a situational report released Saturday, April 4, the Iloilo City

- [Faith-based programs linked to positive behavior among inmates – BuCor](#) (2026-04-04 18:27)

MANILA, Philippines — Inmates who participate in faith-based rehabilitation programs are showing lesser tendencies toward aggression based on an international research,the Bureau of Corrections (BuCor) said on Black Saturday BuCor Director General Gregorio Pio Catapang Jr. cited findings of research from the International Research in Corrections Conference in Auckland, New Zealand. The conference, joined by

- [DSWD vows legal, protective action in CamSur shelter abuse case](#) (2026-04-04 18:14)

MANILA, Philippines—The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) said it will take “legal and protective actions” against a barangay official in Camarines Sur tagged in alleged harassment in a shelter and will also seek the assistance of the interior department in probing the erring local officials. The DSWD was heeding the instructions of President

- [Iloilo City police: P42 M drugs seized, 211 arrested in Q1 of 2026](#) (2026-04-04 18:07)

ILOILO CITY – The Iloilo City Police Office (ICPO) recently reported that its 170 anti-drug operations from Jan. 1 to March 31 this year resulted in the arrest of 211 suspects and seizure of some 6.2 kilos of meth and minor quantities of marijuana, all valued at around P42.2 million. It said the operations dealt

- [Relics of San Miguel Arcangel stolen from Bulacan church](#) (2026-04-04 17:56)

MANILA, Philippines — The Diocesan Shrine and Parish of San Miguel Arcangel in Poblacion, San Miguel, Bulacan confirmed the theft of several sacred relics made of silver on Black Saturday. The parish said the missing items include the silver pakpak (wings), kalasag (shield), sibat (spear), and espada (sword) of its patron saint, San Miguel

- [Good Friday generally peaceful – PNP](#) (2026-04-04 17:14)

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippine National Police (PNP) on Saturday said the nationwide observance of Good Friday was generally peaceful, with no major incidents reported during religious activities. Holy Masses and processions, the PNP said, were carried out in an orderly manner across Catholic communities, citing public cooperation and coordination with local authorities, PNP chief

- [LOOK: Quiapo Church holds Black Saturday silent procession](#) (2026-04-04 16:35)

MANILA, Philippines — Devotees gathered at Minor Basilica of the Black Nazarene on Black Saturday for the annual “Prusisyon de Silencio” (silent procession), a solemn procession held in honor of the grieving Virgin Mary. (Photo from Quiapo Church / Facebook) Observed in complete silence, the procession allowed participants to reflect on the sorrow of Nuestra

- [Several Holy Week pilgrimage sites spoiled by piles of trash – EcoWaste](#) (2026-04-04 15:35)

Piles of trash after the Alay Lakad to the International Shrine of Our Lady of Peace and Good Voyage on Maundy Thursday in Antipolo. (Photo from EcoWaste Coalition.) MANILA, Philippines — Litterbugs spoiled a number of pilgrimage sites and public spaces during Holy Week despite repeated calls for cleanliness “as if it has become a

- [Tulfo on Naia T1 ceiling collapse: Swift, proper aid to victims a must](#) (2026-04-04 14:03)

MANILA, Philippines — Senator Raffy Tulfo on Saturday underscored the importance of swift and proper response during emergencies and accidents following the collapse of a portion of the ceiling at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (Naia) Terminal 1 which injured seven persons on Good Friday. “As chairperson of the Senate committee on public services, Senator

- [LOOK: Grass fire hits Mt. Kabunian in Bakun, Benguet; 18 hikers rescued](#) (2026-04-04 13:46)

MANILA, Philippines — Grass fire burned portions of Mt. Kabunian in Bakun, Benguet on Maundy Thursday, April 2, prompting rescue operations for 18 hikers in the area. Mt. Kabunian, a popular trekking destination, drew hikers over the Holy Week when the fire reportedly broke out at around 6:50 p.m. According to the Bakun Municipal Disaster

- [LTO summons truck owner, driver in video of kid ‘operating’ concrete mixer](#) (2026-04-04 13:45)

MANILA, Philippines — The Land Transportation Office (LTO) has summoned the registered owner and the designated driver of a truck involved in a viral incident wherein a child was seen

seemingly operating the concrete transit mixer. In a statement on Saturday, the LTO said it issued a show cause followed by an administrative investigation after

- [Ejercito hails Iran’ s safe passage pledge for Filipinos in Strait of Hormuz](#) (2026-04-04 13:17)

MANILA, Philippines — Senator JV Ejercito hopes that the guarantee of the safe passage for Philippine-flagged vessels and Filipino seafarers through the Strait of Hormuz “will materialize and will be sustained.” He made the statement as the country reels from the rising cost of fuel due to the ongoing war in the Middle East. The

- [Green group urges clean picnics: Take garbage as you leave excursion spot](#) (2026-04-04 13:07)

LUCENA CITY — As Filipinos flock to beaches, rivers and picnic spots this Easter Sunday, an environmental group is urging the public to celebrate responsibly and protect nature from garbage. “Picnics are fun, but they’ re even better when no trash is left behind in our rivers, beaches and forests,” said Jay Lim in a phone

- [Mt. Banahaw in Quezon draws pilgrims, tourists despite restrictions](#) (2026-04-04 12:52)

LUCENA CITY — Religious pilgrims and tourists are arriving at the foot of Mount Banahaw in Dolores, Quezon, as practices relating to Holy Week and outdoor activities draw crowds to the area. Mayor Orlan Calayag reminded visitors to help maintain cleanliness and order during the Lenten season. “Let us cooperate in maintaining order and cleanliness

- [PCG rescues intoxicated swimmer who was drowning in Cagayan waters](#) (2026-04-04 12:43)

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippine Coast Guard rescued a 38-year-old man who was drowning at sea in Barangay Centro 1, Claveria, Cagayan on Good Friday. In a report on Black Saturday, the PCG said the victim was spotted struggling in the water around 2:02 p.m. An officer from the Coast Guard Sub-Station Claveria Baywatch immediately

- [Woman nabbed for allegedly bringing ammunition to airport posts bail](#) (2026-04-04 12:02)

PUERTO PRINCESA CITY— A 67-year-old woman arrested at Puerto Princesa International Airport on March 31 has posted a P100,000 bail for temporary liberty, as prosecutors prepare to file charges against her for allegedly carrying ammunition inside an airport. In particular, law enforcers said she violated Republic Act No. 10591 or the Comprehensive Firearms and Ammunition

- [Tayabas City cancels Easter Sunday fest ‘Tayabasaan’ amid energy crisis](#) (2026-04-04 11:46)

LUCENA CITY — The local government of Tayabas City in Quezon province has canceled its Easter Sunday activities under “Tayabasaan 2026” that were to be funded with public money.

In a statement, the City Information and Public Relations Office (CICRO) said the decision came from Mayor Piwa Lim following consultations with the offices concerned. The

- [Ex-solon to Marcos: Shift to renewable energy, instead of importing oil](#) (2026-04-04 11:38)

MANILA, Philippines — Former lawmaker Carlos Zarate on Saturday urged the administration of President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. to shift to renewable energy amid the ongoing Middle East war. He also said government should not just rely on Iran's assurance of safe passage of Philippine-flagged vessels through the Strait of Hormuz. The former Bayan Muna representative

- [Motorcycle-truck collision leaves one dead in Surigao del Sur](#) (2026-04-04 11:03)

TANDAG CITY, Surigao del Sur — A 41-year-old motorcycle rider died on the spot after a collision with a truck along the national highway in Barangay Unaban, Tago, Surigao del Sur on Friday evening, April 3. According to an investigation by the Tago Municipal Police Station (MPS), the accident occurred at 8:45 p.m. in Purok

- [2 cops, BuCor employee die in Good Friday Puerto Princesa City shooting](#) (2026-04-04 10:55)

PUERTO PRINCESA CITY — Two police officers and a Bureau of Corrections (BuCor) worker were shot dead in Barangay Irawan here on the evening of Good Friday, April 3. Residents attending a wake in the area said a confrontation initially broke out between the police officers and several bystanders at 9:40 p.m. The officers reportedly

- [Over 24,000 passengers seen in PH ports on Black Saturday](#) (2026-04-04 10:10)

MANILA, Philippines — Over 24,000 passengers have been monitored so far in all ports of the country on Black Saturday (April 4), according to the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG). Based on its report as of 6 a.m., the PCG recorded 13,776 outbound passengers and 10,687 inbound passengers in all ports nationwide. READ: 2 tourists rescued

- [MPTC gives free towing services for most vehicles in its expressways](#) (2026-04-04 09:33)

MANILA, Philippines — Motorists of Class 1 vehicles across all expressways operated by the Metro Pacific Tollways Corporation (MPTC) can avail free towing services in the nearest exits. Class 1 vehicles include cars, jeepneys, vans, pickups and motorcycles. The announcement comes from the North Luzon Expressway (NLEX) Corporation on Saturday. READ: Marcos on opening of

- [Seismic events still ongoing in Mayon Volcano; alert level 3 remains](#) (2026-04-04 08:46)

MANILA, Philippines — The Mayon Volcano continues to exhibit seismic activities for the past 24 hours as it remains under Alert Level 3 status, which signifies intensified unrest. The Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs) gave this information on Saturday. In its 24-hour monitoring, Phivolcs said that Mayon Volcano recorded a total of 52

- [Easterlies prevail in parts of PH on Saturday \(April 4\)](#) (2026-04-04 07:41)

MANILA, Philippines — Easterlies will continue to bring rainshowers and cloudy skies in some parts of the country, based on the forecast of the state weather bureau. According to Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) weather specialist Loredin de La Cruz-Galicia, the easterlies, or the warm winds coming from the Pacific Ocean, will

- [LOOK: Devotees hold ‘Soledad’ procession in Iloilo City on Good Friday](#) (2026-04-04 02:02)

ILOILO CITY, Philippines — In the silence of the night, devotees accompanied the image of the Sorrowful Mother during the traditional “Soledad” procession in Iloilo City on Good Friday. Departing from St. Clement’s Church at 10 p.m. after the Santo Entierro, the silent procession serves as a communal act of accompanying the Virgin Mary in

- [LOOK: Guimaras devotees join ‘devotional walk’ on Good Friday](#) (2026-04-04 01:31)

GUIMARAS, Philippines — Throngs of Catholic faithful in Jordan town in Guimaras province took part in an evening procession to remember the Passion of Christ on Good Friday. The solemn foot procession snaked through the streets of the town. READ: Holy Week 2026: An INQUIRER.net Special Carrying rosaries and offering silent prayers, devotees followed the

- [Cardinal Advincula: Pray for peace, end of war in Middle East](#) (2026-04-04 00:16)

MANILA, Philippines — Cardinal Jose Advincula on Good Friday urged the faithful to pray for the end of war in the Middle East, emphasizing that its effects are deeply felt by many Filipinos, especially by the overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) and their families and the rising cost of fuel. In his homily during the Celebration

- [LOOK: Devotees jostle to touch Jesus Nazareno in Good Friday procession](#) (2026-04-03 23:08)

MANILA, Philippines — Some devotees of the Jesus Nazarene managed to push through the dense crowd on Good Friday as they tried to get closer to the revered image during the solemn procession in Manila. READ: Veteran ‘Kristo’ ends 37-year crucifixion on Good Friday In a series of photos, devotees were seen trying to touch

- [DOH: Emergency lockdown due to Covid-19 variant ‘fake’](#) (2026-04-03 22:29)

MANILA, Philippines — The Department of Health (DOH) on Friday dismissed circulating claims that there will be an emergency lockdown starting April 10, 2026 due to the “Cicada” variant of the Covid-19 virus. In an advisory, the DOH tagged posts by Facebook pages “Pinoy Newswire,” “Malasakit News Update: Balitang Sapat, Serbisyong Totoo,” and “Weather Patrol”

- [Bataan detainee who escaped recaptured in Mariveles](#) (2026-04-03 22:00)

MARIVELES, Bataan – The police arrested on Wednesday one of two detainees who escaped a day earlier. Police Lt. Col. Mar Joseph Ravelo, Mariveles police chief, said police operatives arrested Jun-jun Jimenez, 33, of Barangay Camaya here. Jimenez’ s co-accused in a car theft case, Jaypee Loquisan, 33, of Poblacion, also of Mariveles, is still at

- [Deus Meus Quare? ‘senakulo’ among Holy Week highlights in Or. Mindoro](#) (2026-04-03 21:50)

CITY OF CALAPAN, ORIENTAL MINDORO – A contemporary retelling of Christ’ s passion, death, and resurrection was staged this Holy Week through the original senakulo musical “Deus Meus Quare? (My God, Why Have You Forsaken Me?)” – Pasyon de Kristo 2026. Carrying the theme “Melody of Salvation, Song of Redemption,” the production draws inspiration from the

- [LIST: Meralco repairs in NCR, Laguna, Bulacan, Cavite from April 3 to 12](#) (2026-04-03 21:45)

MANILA, Philippines — Electric utility provider Manila Electric Company (Meralco) said on Friday that it will conduct scheduled maintenance in Manila, Laguna, Cavite, Muntinlupa, Bulacan, and Quezon City from April 3 to 12. READ: Meralco: No scheduled 3-month long brownouts According to Meralco, the following areas may be affected: April 3 April 4 Calamba City,

- [Good Friday in Zambales: Life-sized religious images fill the streets](#) (2026-04-03 21:39)

SAN ANTONIO, Zambales — Hundreds of life-sized religious images, prepared by camareros (devotees who dedicate their time and effort to honor religious images), moved through the streets of San Antonio as the town observed Good Friday on April 3. The annual burial procession, one of the most anticipated events of Holy Week, featured images depicting

- [Holy Week 2026: Pilgrims flock to Mindoro seminary for devotion](#) (2026-04-03 21:06)

CALAPAN CITY, Oriental Mindoro — Hundreds of pilgrims have flocked to Saint Augustine Seminary in Barangay Suqui this Holy Week for the Stations of the Cross and the blessing of a newly renovated chapel dedicated to Jesus Christ’ s final words. On Good Friday, devotees began arriving before dawn to take part in the Way of

- [Malolos distributes P3,000 fuel aid to tricycle drivers](#) (2026-04-03 20:57)

CITY OF MAOLOS, Bulacan – Ahead of the April 10 national government distribution of Cash Relief Assistance (CRA) for transport sector workers outside the National Capital Region, the local government here has rolled out a fuel cash assistance to public transport groups. At least 1,776 tricycle drivers from 19 local Tricycle Operators and Drivers Associations

- [Youthful devotion: Camarero finds strength in Jesus’ trials](#) (2026-04-03 20:27)

SAN ANTONIO, Zambales — Fifteen-year-old Jomz Andrei Gonzales, one of the youngest camareros (devotees who dedicate their time and effort to honor religious images) here, carefully tended the image of the “Temptation of Jesus” during this year’ s Good Friday observance. The image depicts the biblical episode in which Jesus fasted for 40 days and nights

- [Bukidnon faithful pray for peace in Middle East on Good Friday](#) (2026-04-03 20:11)

VALENCIA CITY, Bukidnon — Thousands of Catholic devotees wearing red joined Good Friday processions around the city center, marking the commemoration of the death of Jesus Christ. Activities at San Agustin Parish focused on solemn rites, including the Siete Palabras, Veneration of the Cross, and the Santo Entierro procession. Many devotees also observed Visita Iglesia,

- [Good Friday procession of Jesus Nazarene peaceful – MPD](#) (2026-04-03 20:10)

MANILA, Philippines — The Good Friday procession of the image of Jesus Nazarene was peaceful, with no major incidents reported, according to the Manila Police District (MPD). Based on the official report of the Quiapo Church command post, the procession began at 11:33 p.m. on Maundy Thursday and ended at 12:51 p.m. on Good Friday.

- [2 tourists rescued in Quezon and Batangas maritime incidents](#) (2026-04-03 20:07)

LUCENA CITY, Quezon — Two tourists were rescued in separate maritime incidents in Quezon and Batangas provinces on Good Friday, according to the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG). The PCG station in northern Quezon said a 22-year-old female tourist nearly drowned while swimming at a beach resort in Barangay Antikin in Infanta town. The victim, whose

- [P50-M smuggled cigarettes seized in Maguindanao del Norte](#) (2026-04-03 19:59)

COTABATO CITY – Police seized smuggled cigarettes valued at P50 million in Datu Odin Sinsuat, Maguindanao del Norte, on Thursday night. In a statement, Capt. Steffi Salanguit, speaking for Police Regional Office-Bangsamoro Autonomous Region, said residents reported abandoned boxes in a vacant lot in Sitio Turugan, Barangay Dinaig Proper, at 11 p.m. on Thursday, April

- [Cotabato City to hit 42°C heat index on Black Saturday — Pagasa](#) (2026-04-03 19:04)

MANILA, Philippines — Cotabato City in Maguindanao is forecast to have the highest heat index at a danger level on Black Saturday, while 69 areas are placed under extreme caution, the state weather bureau said on Good Friday. In its 5 p.m. bulletin, the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical, and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) said Cotabato City

- [Paragliding reopens anew in Ambaguio skyridge in Nueva Vizcaya](#) (2026-04-03 18:41)

BAYOMBONG, Nueva Vizcaya – As the summer season unfurls, the skies in Nueva Vizcaya have been reopened anew to paragliding on Friday, April 3, as local officials and paragliding enthusiasts launched the “Skyridge” take-off site in Barangay Tiblac of Ambaguio town. Governor Jose Gambito said that after a two-year lull in organized flying activities, the

- [2 drug suspects busted, P3.4 M shabu seized in Tagaytay sting](#) (2026-04-03 18:28)

LUCENA CITY, Quezon — Police seized an estimated P3.4 million worth of suspected shabu (crystal meth) from two alleged high-value drug traffickers in a buy-bust operation in Tagaytay City, Cavite on Good Friday. The Cavite police said operatives from the Provincial Drug

Enforcement Unit, together with the local police, arrested the suspects identified only as

- [Pagasa: Humid weather in PH on April 4; thunderstorms possible](#) (2026-04-03 18:07)

MANILA, Philippines — While hot and humid weather is forecast across the country on Black Saturday, localized thunderstorms and cloudy skies are possible, especially in Visayas and Mindanao, the state weather bureau said on Good Friday. In the 5 p.m. weather forecast of the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical, and Astronomical Services Administration, weather specialist Obet Badrina

- [‘Amang Hinulid’ penitential walk in Camarines Sur draws 80,000 devotees](#) (2026-04-03 17:31)

LEGAZPI CITY — More than 80,000 devotees participated in the annual Holy Week Amang Hinulid penitential walk in Calabanga, Camarines Sur. The “Amang Hinulid,” considered miraculous, draws devotees who walk roughly five kilometers from the chapel in Sta. Salud village to the town proper church, with some walking barefoot as an act of penance, thanksgiving,

- [Man drowns in Cagayan River](#) (2026-04-03 17:26)

TUGUEGARAO CITY — The body of a 33-year-old man was recovered on Good Friday, April 3, after he drowned the previous day along the Cagayan River in Barangay Maxingal, Lal-lo, Cagayan, the town information office reported. Rescuers from the Coast Guard, police, and Maritime units had been scouring the river since Thursday. The body was

- [P30.8-M smuggled ketamine found in cable spool at Clark port](#) (2026-04-03 17:25)

MANILA, Philippines — A shipment of ketamine worth P30.78 million from the Netherlands was intercepted at the Port of Clark, the Bureau of Customs said on Good Friday. Further inspection of the package, declared as “solar cables” bound for Pasig City, confirmed it contained ketamine, prompting authorities to issue a warrant of seizure and detention.

- [Holy Week 2026 sees slight dip in Naia passenger traffic](#) (2026-04-03 17:23)

MANILA, Philippines — The number of travelers at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (Naia) this Holy Week has decreased starting Holy Tuesday compared to the daily foot traffic during the same period last year, according to the airport’s private operator, New Naia Infra Corp. (NNIC). Based on the NNIC’s latest data, more travelers were seen

- [Ridon: Collapsed Naia ceiling sparks concern over NNIC upkeep](#) (2026-04-03 17:15)

MANILA, Philippines — The collapse of a portion of the ceiling near the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (Naia) Terminal 1’s arrival extension area raises questions whether the private consortium managing the airport is doing a good job maintaining the facilities, Bicol Saro party-list Rep. Terry Ridon said. In a statement on Friday, Ridon said that New

- [500 attend Good Friday penitential rites in Quezon town](#) (2026-04-03 17:11)

LUCENA CITY — More than 500 residents of General Luna town in Quezon province took part in Good Friday penitential rites as part of the town’s Holy Week observance. According to the local government’s Public Information Office (PIO), about 430 residents portrayed “centurions” as they paraded along the town’s main streets. The PIO described the

- [Fuel crisis: New Lucena in Iloilo declares state of calamity](#) (2026-04-03 17:04)

ILOILO CITY — The municipality of New Lucena in Iloilo province was placed under a state of calamity on April 1 due to the severe economic impact of the global fuel crisis. The declaration comes as the town struggles with soaring fuel prices, worsened by ongoing tensions in the Middle East. With the state of

- [Good Friday procession of Jesus Nazareno gathers over 517,000 devotees](#) (2026-04-03 16:58)

MANILA, Philippines — The Good Friday procession of the image of Jesus Nazarene this year has gathered around 517,650 devotees and lasted for more than 13 hours, according to authorities. Based on the official report of the Quiapo Church command post, the procession began on 11:33 p.m. on Maundy Thursday and ended on 12:51 p.m.

- [DENR awards land titles to 24 beneficiaries in Zambales](#) (2026-04-03 16:19)

SAN ANTONIO, Zambales — Twenty-four Zambales residents received land titles from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), granting them secure ownership and protection from displacement. In a statement on April 2, the DENR said the awards were given during the program Handog Titulo: From Vulnerability to Stability, A Title of Hope. “Secure land

- [5 fishermen rescued after boat engine fails in rough seas off Batangas](#) (2026-04-03 16:02)

LUCENA CITY — Five fishermen were rescued on Good Friday, April 3, after their boat engine failed amid rough seas off Batangas City, the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) reported. According to the Batangas PCG station, the fishing boat, carrying five fishermen, departed Barangay Cuta early Friday for a routine fishing trip. While at sea near

- [21 injured as police car hits pedestrians near Albay pilgrimage site](#) (2026-04-03 15:52)

LEGAZPI CITY — Twenty one persons were injured after a police patrol car rolled downhill and struck pedestrians near Kawa-Kawa Hill and Natural Park in Ligao City, Albay on Good Friday. According to initial police reports, the accident occurred at 9:53 a.m. in Tuburan village, where devotees were walking uphill toward a church for Lenten

- [Barotac Viejo marks 50 years of Good Friday tradition ‘Taltal’](#) (2026-04-03 15:48)

ILOILO CITY — Fifty years of faith and devotion culminated on Good Friday, April 3, as the municipality of Barotac Viejo staged the 50th edition of its iconic “Taltal,” one of Western

Visayas' most enduring and realistic Lenten reenactments. The event drew thousands of spectators, including devout pilgrims, curious tourists, and local residents, who gathered

- [Devotees flock to Bangan Hill in Nueva Vizcaya for Good Friday rites](#) (2026-04-03 15:34)

BAYOMBONG, Nueva Vizcaya — Reaffirming their Christian faith, more than 2,000 devotees endured a roughly three-kilometer uphill trek to join a Good Friday procession and the reenactment of the 14 Stations of the Cross at Bangan Hill National Park in Barangay Vista Alegre. Dubbed Pagna-nilay—a combination of the Ilocano word for “walk” and the Filipino

- [Elderly honored in Calapan Holy Week ritual](#) (2026-04-03 15:31)

CALAPAN CITY, Oriental Mindoro — The elderly once overlooked and abandoned took center stage in a moving Holy Week celebration at the Hapag Aruga Foundation, where they were honored through the ritual washing of feet, which emphasized compassion, dignity, and care. The liturgy brought to life the Gospel account of Jesus Christ' s final meal with

- [Devotees flock to Ligao' s Kawa-Kawa Hill and Natural Park for Lenten rites](#) (2026-04-03 15:06)

LEGAZPI CITY — Devotees and tourists flocked to Kawa-Kawa Hill and Natural Park in Ligao City to observe the Way of the Cross during the Lenten season. Located in Barangay Tuburan, the site remains one of Albay' s most visited destinations, known for its life-sized statues depicting the passion and death of Jesus Christ. Pilgrims also

- [Pilgrims walk to Kamay ni Hesus Shrine in Quezon amid fuel price hike](#) (2026-04-03 14:26)

LUCENA CITY — Amid rising fuel costs, many pilgrims chose to walk to the Kamay ni Hesus (KNH) Shrine in Lucban, Quezon, on Good Friday, April 3. “Look, 2.4 million—an ocean of people in just one day, despite the world oil crisis. They say gasoline is expensive, so they just walked instead,” Fr. Joey Faller,

- [PNP urges vigilance as 7 cases of drowning recorded during Holy Week](#) (2026-04-03 14:09)

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippine National Police (PNP) reminds the public to stay vigilant this Holy Week, as several drowning incidents have been recorded across the country. As of 6:00 a.m. on Good Friday, the PNP reported seven drowning-related cases in different swimming locations. It said, “These are being addressed by authorities, with police and

- [P5,000 fuel aid set for 10,000 transport drivers in Eastern Visayas](#) (2026-04-03 13:46)

TACLOBAN CITY — More than 10,000 public transport drivers across Eastern Visayas are set to receive P5,000 each in financial assistance from the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), as the government seeks to ease the burden of rising fuel prices on the transport sector. DSWD regional spokesperson, lawyer Jonalyn Chua, said the cash

- [OIL PRICE WATCH as of April 3, 2026](#) (2026-04-03 13:41)

MANILA, Philippines – While many faithful are taking a pause from the daily grind and reflect on sacrifice of Jesus Christ this Good Friday, motorists are bracing for another round of oil price hikes that could further strain the already stretched household budgets next week. Industry projections point to significant increases in pump prices next

- [Zambales town records over 9,000 tourists as of Good Friday](#) (2026-04-03 13:28)

SAN ANTONIO, Zambales — More than 9,000 tourists have visited this town, with arrivals continuing to rise on Good Friday (April 3). READ: Zambales town named top tourist destination in Central Luzon According to data from the municipal tourism office, as of 6:30 p.m. on Maundy Thursday (April 2), there were 1,433 visitors in the

- [Ceiling at Naia terminal 1 collapses on Good Friday](#) (2026-04-03 13:25)

MANILA, Philippines — A section of the ceiling at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (Naia) Terminal 1 collapsed on Good Friday, April 3. According to the Facebook post by the uploader, Johnmark Florendo, a portion of the ceiling fell onto the airport’s waiting chairs. Florendo, a rental agent at Naia, told the INQUIRER in a

- [Palace debunks ‘energy lockdown’ claim as fake news](#) (2026-04-03 13:24)

MANILA, Philippines — Malacañang on Friday labeled as fake news a circulating “announcement” supposedly from the Department of Energy (DOE) claiming there would be an energy lockdown starting April 20, 2026. Palace Press Officer Claire Castro told reporters via a Viber message that the advisory, which even bears the DOE logo, is “fake news.” The fraudulent

- [In Bohol, binignit is more than dessert – it’s Holy Week tradition](#) (2026-04-03 13:23)

TAGBILARAN CITY — The quiet rhythm of Holy Week in Bohol is once again marked by the gentle simmer of binignit, a popular Visayan sweet stew associated with fasting and reflection, as households across the province continue a cherished tradition passed down through generations. The well-loved Visayan dessert, typically served on Good Friday, remains a

- [Holy Week in Boracay draws pilgrims, tourists; responsible travel urged](#) (2026-04-03 13:20)

ILOILO CITY — Holy Week observances on Boracay Island, which began in March, are set to intensify on Good Friday, April 3, as major religious rites draw both pilgrims and tourists, prompting renewed calls for responsible travel and environmental stewardship. The Lenten activities at the Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary Parish in Balabag

- [Wooden rattles mark Holy Week in Northern Samar town](#) (2026-04-03 13:00)

TACLOBAN CITY — The solemn observance of Holy Week in the quiet coastal town of San Roque in Northern Samar is marked not by the ringing of church bells, but by the steady, haunting rhythm of a simple wooden instrument—the matraka. From Maundy Thursday through Black Saturday, Catholic churches traditionally fall silent in mourning of

- [Bayan Muna seeks release of 2 arrested activists in Iloilo](#) (2026-04-03 12:55)

MANILA, Philippines — Bayan Muna on Good Friday condemns the arrest of two senior women activists in Iloilo on Maundy Thursday, describing the incident as “cruelty dressed up as law enforcement.” On Thursday, April 2, the two women development workers, Josephine Porquia, 64, and Ma. Luisa Guillen, 62, were arrested during a joint police-military operation.

- [LTO summons driver for reckless stunt on moving vehicle](#) (2026-04-03 12:14)

MANILA, Philippines — The Land Transportation Office (LTO) has summoned the driver caught in a viral video operating his car while standing outside of the vehicle’s open door on a public road. READ: LTFRB summons taxi operator over K-pop star ‘overcharging’ incident Based on the show-cause order released Friday, the LTO noted that the driver’s

- [Phivolcs: Mayon Volcano rockfall triggers overnight bushfire](#) (2026-04-03 12:13)

MANILA, Philippines — A rockfall event at the southern lower slopes of Mayon Volcano in the province of Albay ignited a bushfire on the night of Maundy Thursday before it ceased this morning, authorities reported Friday. According to the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs)’ s advisory, the bushfire “burned all night and had ceased

- [Guimaras boat operators also jack up fares](#) (2026-04-03 12:12)

ILOILO CITY — Following a series of historic oil price hikes across the country, motorboat operators in Guimaras have announced impending fare increases. The Guimaras Island Transport Multipurpose Cooperative (GITMPC) announced on March 26 that starting April 7, regular fares for its ferries plying between the Iloilo City and Jordan wharves will rise to P40.

- [Solon: Meeting between HOAs, LGUs needed to help in policy-making](#) (2026-04-03 12:06)

MANILA, Philippines — A lawmaker is proposing to institutionalize regular meetings between homeowners’ associations (HOAs) and local government units (LGUs) so that communities’ needs are considered in policymaking. In a statement on Tuesday, Parañaque Rep. Brian Raymund Yamsuan said he has filed House Bill No. 2582, which seeks amendments to Republic Act No. 9904 or

- [ACT tells gov’ t: Time to place standardized wage for private teachers](#) (2026-04-03 12:05)

MANILA, Philippines — The private school arm of the Alliance of Concerned Teachers (ACT) has called out the government over its lack of support for private school educators, reiterating its call for standardized minimum wage among their ranks. Jonathan Geronimo, secretary general of ACT Private Schools, also lamented the lack of response from the national

- [Boat fare between Boracay and Caticlan to rise by P10 starting April 16](#) (2026-04-03 11:39)

ILOILO CITY—Boat fares for passengers traveling between Caticlan and Boracay Island will increase by P10 beginning April 16, as operators seek to offset rising fuel costs driven by global

oil price pressures. In an announcement, the Caticlan-Boracay Transport Multi-Purpose Cooperative (CBTMPC)—the primary group managing pump boat operations on the busy gateway route—said the fare adjustment

- [LTFRB summons taxi operator over K-pop star ‘overcharging’ incident](#) (2026-04-03 11:20)

MANILA, Philippines — The Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB) has issued a show-cause order against the operator of a taxi accused of overcharging a South Korean singer-songwriter during a vacation in Cebu. Based on the LTFRB’s show-cause order, the taxi operator was directed to appear before a hearing set for April 21 and

- [21 hurt in head-on collision in Northern Samar](#) (2026-04-03 11:06)

TACLOBAN CITY — At least 21 individuals, four of them minors, were injured following a vehicular collision along a curved section of the road in Barangay Libas, Lavezares, Northern Samar, on Thursday afternoon, April 2. According to a report from the Police Regional Office (PRO-8), the incident occurred at 2:20 p.m. but was reported about

- [Quezon farmers turn to ‘Pasyon’ to sustain fight for land and justice](#) (2026-04-03 10:31)

LUCENA CITY — Farmers in Sariaya, Quezon, who lost their land following the revocation of their Certificates of Land Ownership Award (CLOAs), have turned to the Holy Week tradition of reading the “Pasyong Mahal” to draw strength as they continue their fight to reclaim their farms. “Their observance of Holy Week through the pasyon is

- [Veteran ‘Kristo’ ends 37-year crucifixion on Good Friday](#) (2026-04-03 10:29)

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO— After four years of planning to end his devotion of real-life crucifixion, Ruben Enaje is finally stepping away, performing it for the 37th and final time this Good Friday, April 3. READ: Hijos del Nazareno urge silence prayer in Good Friday procession For the final rite on a Calvary-like hill in

- [Over 23,000 passengers in ports early Good Friday — PCG](#) (2026-04-03 09:58)

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) recorded over 23,000 passengers in ports early Good Friday as it continued monitoring nationwide travel during Holy Week. From midnight to 6 a.m., the PCG recorded 11,418 outbound and 11,677 inbound passengers at ports nationwide. READ: Over 44,000 passengers in ports early Holy Wednesday, says PCG Based

- [When bells go quiet, a wooden clatter marks Holy Week rites](#) (2026-04-03 09:56)

As the Mass of the Lord’s Supper was celebrated on Holy Thursday, April 2, many may have heard a different sound — not the usual ringing of bells, but the sharp clatter of a wooden clapper marking the solemn transition toward the commemoration of the Lord’s Passion and death. Known as a crotalus, the wooden

- [Faithful reenact Christ's passion in Iloilo's Good Friday Via Crucis](#) (2026-04-03 09:41)

ILOILO CITY — Catholic faithful from across Iloilo gathered before daybreak to take part in the solemn Via Crucis (Stations of the Cross) organized by St. Clement's Church – Redemptorists Iloilo on Good Friday, April 3. The traditional procession began at St. Clement's Church and wound its way through the seven Basic Ecclesial Communities (BECs)

- [WATCH: Filipinos mark Good Friday with Mass, prayer](#) (2026-04-03 09:35)

MANILA, Philippines – Thousands of Catholic faithful gather for Good Friday Mass, marking one of the most solemn days in the Christian calendar. As Filipinos observe Holy Week, many continue age-old practices, including the Visita Iglesia and Stations of the Cross, to express devotion, drawing communities together in remembrance of Christ's sacrifice. Below is the

- [CBCP: Put prayer at the center of Holy Week](#) (2026-04-03 09:06)

MANILA, Philippines — The Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) is urging Filipino families to refocus Holy Week on shared prayer and spiritual renewal, rather than treat it mainly as a time for reunions, social gatherings and routine traditions. Lipa Archbishop Gilbert Garcera, CBCP president, said the annual observance calls for a deeper encounter

- [Devotees join the Black Nazarene procession on Good Friday](#) (2026-04-03 08:39)

MANILA, Philippines – Devotees filled the streets of Manila on Good Friday as they took part in the procession of the Black Nazarene, one of the most anticipated religious events during Holy Week. According to Quiapo Church, the procession was set to begin at midnight of Good Friday and it started earlier than scheduled. In

- [Good Friday message: Marcos calls for 'faith, humility, compassion'](#) (2026-04-03 08:37)

MANILA, Philippines — As Catholics observed Good Friday, President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. urged the faithful to live with “greater faith, humility, and compassion.” In a message posted on social media, Marcos joined Christians in commemorating the crucifixion and death of Jesus Christ at Calvary. READ: Holy Week 2026: Intramuros, the lost heart of devotion “Today, we

- [Hot, humid Good Friday as easterlies prevail — Pagasa](#) (2026-04-03 07:42)

MANILA, Philippines — Warm and humid weather will persist across much of the country on Good Friday due to prevailing easterlies, the state weather bureau said. According to the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa), the easterlies, or warm winds coming from the Pacific Ocean, will continue to affect Central and Southern Luzon,

- [Holy Week 2026: Intramuros, the lost heart of devotion](#) (2026-04-03 07:00)

Intramuros, literally the “Walled City” of Manila, was built four and a half centuries ago, but it remains to be one of the most renowned places in the country. Today, it has become a site of faith and devotion, far removed from its dark history seemingly embedded in the country's

identity. As the Filipino faithful

- [BI defends move over viral video of passenger blocked to travel](#) (2026-04-02 23:27)

MANILA, Philippines — The Bureau of Immigration (BI) on Thursday clarified that the viral video of a traveler whose departure was deferred at Ninoy Aquino International Airport (Naia) was due to inconsistencies in their statements. According to the BI in a statement, the female passenger was intercepted on the afternoon of March 30 after an

- [375 gas stations remain closed amid oil crisis –PNP report](#) (2026-04-02 22:03)

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippine National Police (PNP) on Thursday said 375 gas stations remain closed amid the oil crisis caused by the continuing military conflict in the Middle East. The PNP released the figure after continuing to monitor the ongoing oil crisis amid a full alert status since March 31, with over 98,000 personnel

- [2 activists tagged as communist rebels arrested in Iloilo town](#) (2026-04-02 21:39)

ILOILO CITY — Two elderly women activists, one tagged by authorities as a communist rebel, were arrested in a joint police and military operation in Barangay Aganan of Pavia town, Iloilo on Maundy Thursday, April 2. A press release by the Police Regional Office-6 (PRO-6) identified the suspected rebel only as “Dhaday” or “Gie,” 64, allegedly a

- [Bohol police crack down on illegal cockfights during Holy Week](#) (2026-04-02 20:27)

TAGBILARAN CITY, BOHOL, Philippines — The Bohol Police Provincial Office (BPPO) has stepped up its campaign against illegal cockfighting, locally known as “tukis,” warning that violators will face immediate arrest and criminal charges. Maj. Rey Olar, BPPO public information officer, said the intensified operations were ordered by Col. Patricio Degay Jr., provincial police director, to

- [2 drug suspects yield P1.5-M worth of ‘kush’ in Antipolo City](#) (2026-04-02 20:25)

LUCENA CITY, Quezon – Authorities seized more than P1.5 million worth of “kush” or high-grade marijuana, and arrested two alleged big-time traffickers in a buy-bust operation on Wednesday, in Antipolo City, Rizal. The Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA)–Region 4A, in a belated report on Thursday, said that their agents and Rizal police operatives nabbed the

- [Iloilo Holy Week tourists urged to behave, respect sacred spaces](#) (2026-04-02 20:11)

ILOILO CITY — Visitors heading to this heritage-rich destination for Holy Week are being urged to observe proper decorum and plan their trips carefully, as the city government released a Lenten advisory to ensure a safe and meaningful observance of Semana Santa. READ: LOOK: Holy Week exodus in Iloilo City The advisory, issued by the

- [Binignit takes center stage among Holy Week dishes in Mindanao](#) (2026-04-02 20:08)

VALENCIA CITY, Bukidnon — As early as 6 a.m. on Wednesday, residents flocked to this city's two main public markets — the Farmers Market and Central Market — to buy ingredients for traditional Holy Week dishes, with binignit taking center stage. Vendors said demand surged as families prepared for the observance of Lent, when many Christians refrain

- [On Maundy Thursday, Zambales witnesses centuries-old rite of humility](#) (2026-04-02 20:04)

SAN ANTONIO, Zambales — In churches across the country, one of the most solemn and symbolic moments of the Holy Week unfolds on Holy Thursday as priests kneel before parishioners to wash their feet, reenacting an act of humility performed by Jesus Christ during the Last Supper. The centuries-old stone walls of the Holy Child

- [PH areas' heat indices to reach 'extreme caution' on April 3](#) (2026-04-02 19:40)

MANILA, Philippines — Heat indices in many areas in the country are expected to reach the “extreme caution” category on Good Friday, April 3, the state weather bureau said. The Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical, and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) defines heat index as the “measure of the contribution that high humidity makes with abnormally high temperatures

- [Pangasinan cuts back on Pista'y Dayat activities](#) (2026-04-02 19:09)

LINGAYEN, Pangasinan, Philippines – The provincial government of Pangasinan has decided to forego the grandiose Pista'y Dayat (Sea Festival) revelry this year, saying the budget would instead be saved and used for projects that would help the Pangasinenses cope with the skyrocketing cost of living. But some activities will continue as they have been started.

- [DOT reminds tourists: Stay outside Mayon danger zones](#) (2026-04-02 19:05)

LEGAZPI CITY, Albay — The Department of Tourism (DOT) in the Bicol region has reminded tourists to stay away from the declared six-kilometer permanent danger zone around Mayon Volcano while engaging in activities during the Holy Week break. DOT Regional Director Herbie Aguas said Mayon remains under Alert Level 3 and is still in an

- [Some devotees in Isabela cut back on Visita Iglesia](#) (2026-04-02 19:05)

CITY OF ILAGAN, Isabela — Some devotees have cut back on Visita Iglesia, a tradition during Maundy Thursday and Good Friday. This is partly due to the staggering oil price hikes that brought the price of a liter of diesel to at least P121 here and at least P90 for gasoline. “Last year and in

- [Its final: Rappler wins shutdown fight](#) (2026-04-02 19:01)

MANILA, Philippines — The Supreme Court (SC) has terminated the government's decade-long case to shut down online news website Rappler. In an order promulgated Jan. 20, 2026 but made public Thursday, the SC's Third Division has declared the case “closed and terminated and the parties informed accordingly.” The SC issued the resolution after the Office

- [Palo’ s Molabola Festival blends faith, food, tradition during Holy Week](#) (2026-04-02 19:00)

TACLOBAN CITY, Philippines – In the historic town of Palo, Leyte, Holy Week is not only marked by solemn processions and quiet moments of pamalandong, or spiritual reflection, it’ s also shaped by the aroma of a beloved delicacy that has nourished both body and soul for generations: mola-bola. This year, the town brought that tradition

- [Iloilo City on blue alert amid Holy Week travel surge](#) (2026-04-02 18:45)

ILOILO CITY – Authorities here have raised a blue alert and deployed more than 500 personnel as part of heightened preparedness measures for Holy Week 2026, with initial reports showing peaceful conditions despite increased travel activity. In a situational report issued by the Iloilo City Emergency Operations Center (EOC), the city confirmed that 574 personnel

- [Palawan plane crash: Bodies of 2 pilots recovered](#) (2026-04-02 17:39)

PUERTO PRINCESA CITY, Palawan, Philippines — Authorities recovered the bodies of two pilots from the crash site of an aircraft that went down on Thursday in Barangay Decalachao, Coron town. The aircraft had just taken off from Francisco B. Reyes Airport at 11:34 a.m., en route to Sangley Point, Cavite, carrying 63 boxes of live

- [LTFRB to file raps vs taxi driver, operator for overcharging K-pop star](#) (2026-04-02 17:32)

MANILA, Philippines — The Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB) on Thursday said that it has directed the filing of criminal charges against the driver and operator of a taxi accused of overcharging a South Korean singer-songwriter. According to the LTFRB, the charges are on top of the administrative charges filed against them, as

- [LOOK: MRT-3, LRT-2 lines begin maintenance works on Maundy Thursday](#) (2026-04-02 17:11)

MANILA, Philippines — Personnel of the Metro Rail Transit (MRT-3) and Light Rail Transit (LRT-2) on Thursday started their yearly maintenance activities to ensure safety of the passengers when they resume operations on April 6, Monday. In a series of photos, the LRT-2 shared pictures of personnel fixing the Ticket Vending Machine, replacement of contact

- [LOOK: Dagupan ‘bangus’ harvest peaks on Holy Wednesday](#) (2026-04-02 16:51)

DAGUPAN CITY — At the fish market in Magsaysay, Dagupan City, on Holy Wednesday, workers unloaded newly harvested bangus, or milkfish. While the rest of Christendom observes a period of spiritual reflection, bangus classifiers and traders continue their work, as Holy Wednesday and Holy Thursday are among the busiest times of the year at the

- [W. Visayas police heightens security during summer travel season](#) (2026-04-02 16:48)

ILOILO CITY — The Police Regional Office 6 (PRO6) is tightening security measures across Western Visayas in anticipation of the upcoming summer travel surge. PRO 6 said said they are

aiming to ensure the safety of the public as millions are expected to travel for Holy Week, Philippine Veterans Week, Labor Day, Flores de Mayo, and various

- [Hijos del Nazareno urge silence, prayer in Good Friday procession](#) (2026-04-02 16:32)

MANILA, Philippines — The Hijos del Nazareno have reminded devotees joining the Good Friday procession of the image of Jesus Nazarene to observe solemnity, as this day marks the crucifixion and death of Jesus Christ. READ: [Ang Paglilibing: The solemn cast of Good Friday processions](#) In an advisory, the hijos or the marshals who ensure the

- [PNP arrests top 5 most wanted in Pampanga for human trafficking](#) (2026-04-02 16:20)

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippine National Police (PNP) arrested a provincial top-five most wanted individual on multiple human trafficking charges during an operation on Wednesday in Barangay Telapayong, Arayat, Pampanga. The arrest was part of a joint operation involving the Mabalacat City Police Station, the Pampanga Police Provincial Office, and the 302nd Maneuver Company of

- [Activists stage ‘Calvary of nature and people’ protest in Bataan](#) (2026-04-02 16:12)

BALANGA CITY, Bataan — Hundreds of youth members of the Nuclear and Coal-Free Bataan and Young Bean staged a protest action on Holy Wednesday, depicting the country’s environmental woes through Jesus Christ’s walk to Calvary. The “Kalbaryo ng Kalikasan at Mamamayan” (Calvary of nature and people) began at 3 p.m. at the public plaza of

- [1,000 police personnel deployed for safe summer travels in Negros](#) (2026-04-02 16:12)

BACOLOD CITY – The police in the Negros Island Region has activated a comprehensive Ligtas Summer Vacation (SUMVAC) deployment from March 29 to May 31, mobilizing over 1,000 personnel across the region to ensure a safe and secure environment for both residents and visitors during the peak vacation season. The deployment will be augmented by

- [Solon warns of smaller bread, meal servings if LPG price spikes](#) (2026-04-02 15:59)

MANILA, Philippines — The size of the common man’s pan de sal and meals served by carinderias may shrink if the government fails to address rising liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) and kerosene prices, which are used for cooking, Senior Citizens party-list Rep. Rodolfo Ordanes said on Thursday. Ordanes said in a statement that fuel price increases

- [Manila lists road closures, alternate routes for Nazarene procession](#) (2026-04-02 15:44)

MANILA, Philippines — The Manila Public Information Office (PIO) has advised motorists to take alternate routes as some roads will be closed for the procession of the image of Jesus Nazarene on Good Friday. READ: [Ang Paglilibing: The solemn cast of Good Friday processions](#) In an advisory on Wednesday, the Manila PIO said that the

- [Army officer killed in Mindoro clash receives Gold Cross Medal](#) (2026-04-02 15:43)

LUCENA CITY, Quezon — The military has posthumously awarded the Gold Cross Medal — the Armed Forces of the Philippines’ third-highest award for bravery — to Army Capt. Dean Buen Oyando, who was killed in a clash with communist rebels in Occidental Mindoro on Sunday, March 29. READ: Army officer killed, 2 soldiers hurt, NPA

- [PNP nabs most wanted person facing 6 counts of rape in Quezon City](#) (2026-04-02 15:41)

MANILA, Philippines – A most wanted person facing six counts of qualified rape of a minor was arrested by the Philippine National Police (PNP) in an operation conducted along Malvar Street in Barangay Bagumbuhay, Project 4, Quezon City, on Tuesday. The court ordered no bail for the accused, who is now under police custody pending

- [Traditional games boost heritage recognition at Kaamulan Festival](#) (2026-04-02 15:41)

MALAYBALAY CITY, Bukidnon — Under the summer heat and amid loud cheers from the crowd, competitors outdid each other in traditional games at the Kaamulan Festival. The tribal sports, known as Kag-alu-alu tu Kaamulan, drew large crowds from March 27 to 29, signaling to organizers the growing recognition of the province’ s cultural heritage by locals and

- [Hontiveros slams fake news peddlers; urges Meta to act](#) (2026-04-02 15:36)

MANILA, Philippines — Sen. Risa Hontiveros on Maundy Thursday urged the public to be wary of fake news and AI-generated content on social media. This followed a series of false information about the senator circulating online from various social media users during the Lenten season. “Please, fellow countrymen: Let’ s not give in to fake news

- [Aircraft crash-lands at Busuanga airport in Palawan on Maundy Thursday](#) (2026-04-02 15:21)

MANILA, Philippines — An aircraft crash-landed on Road 08 of Busuanga airport in Coron, Palawan, prompting the temporary suspension of operations and diversion of several flights. The Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippines (Caap) said the incident happened at approximately 11:34 a.m. on Maundy Thursday. Authorities have not yet confirmed the type of aircraft involved

- [Chrism Mass explained: Why priests renew their promises](#) (2026-04-02 15:21)

Every year, from Holy Monday to Holy Thursday, dioceses in the Philippines and around the world celebrate the Chrism Mass — a solemn liturgy marked not only by the blessing of sacred oils but also by the renewal of priestly promises. This renewal is not merely ceremonial. It is a profound act rooted in the

- [Puerto Galera cracks down on ferry ticket scalping amid tourist surge](#) (2026-04-02 15:20)

CALAPAN CITY, Oriental Mindoro — The Puerto Galera government has cracked down on the scalping of ferry tickets and the overpricing of water taxi services to protect tourists and preserve the integrity of its local travel industry. Mayor Robinhood Ylagan signed Executive

Order No. 30-2026 on March 31, targeting “deceptive, unfair, and unconscionable salespractices”

- [Shellfish ban remains up in Eastern Samar bay due to red tide – BFAR](#) (2026-04-02 15:12)

TACLOBAN CITY, Philippines — The Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) in Eastern Visayas has maintained a shellfish ban in Matarinao Bay in Eastern Samar after laboratory tests confirmed the continued presence of red tide toxins, according to an advisory issued on March 31. BFAR reported that shellfish meat samples collected from Matarinao Bay

- [Light traffic seen along NLEX on Maundy Thursday afternoon](#) (2026-04-02 15:11)

MANILA, Philippines — Light traffic with no congestion was observed along toll plazas and interchanges of the North Luzon Expressway (NLEX) on Maundy Thursday afternoon. READ: Terminal case: As fuel cost soars, car owners taking bus instead In a live traffic update, NLEX Corporation reported smooth flow of vehicles across key areas, with footage showing

- [Slain Army captain accorded hero’ s welcome in Kalinga](#) (2026-04-02 14:51)

ROXAS, Isabela — A hero’ s welcome was given to Army Captain Dean Oyando, an i-Kalinga who was killed in a clash with New People’ s Army rebels in Mindoro. Oyando’ s remains arrived at the headquarters of the Army’ s 503rd Infantry Brigade in Calanan, Tabuk City, on Wednesday, April 1. His body, placed in a flag-draped coffin,

- [Bohol pilgrims mark Holy Week with Visita Iglesia](#) (2026-04-02 14:49)

TAGBILARAN CITY, Bohol – Thousands of Catholic faithful are expected to observe Visita Iglesia, a long-standing Lenten tradition of visiting churches for prayer and reflection. Holy Week offers the faithful a time to recall the Passion of Jesus Christ—from His suffering and death on Good Friday to His resurrection on Easter Sunday—inviting believers into deeper

- [Mayon Volcano exhibits lava fountaining on Maundy Thursday](#) (2026-04-02 14:45)

MANILA, Philippines — Mayon Volcano in Albay exhibited “short-lived” lava fountaining on Maundy Thursday, April 2, the Office of Civil Defense (OCD) reported. The OCD said in a Facebook post that Mayon’ s lava fountaining started at 10:32 a.m. this Thursday. READ: Mayon Volcano’ s effusive eruption enters 84th day “Stay alert, always be careful, and follow

- [Masbate police arrest man for alleged illegal diesel transport](#) (2026-04-02 14:38)

LEGAZPI CITY, Albay — Police confiscated 1,250 liters of diesel and arrested a suspect who was allegedly transporting the fuel illegally in Balud town, Masbate province, on Wednesday. In a report, the Police Regional Office 5 (PRO-5) said the suspect, identified only as alias “Rey,” was caught in possession of five blue plastic drums containing

- [2 feared dead as small plane crashes in Coron](#) (2026-04-02 14:38)

Puerto Princesa City, Palawan— A Baron light aircraft crashed in a grassy area in Barangay Decalachao in Coron shortly after taking off from Francisco B. Reyes Airport at around 11:39 a.m. on Maundy Thursday, April 2. Witnesses reported that two crew aboard the aircraft died in the crash. READ: 2 dead, 3 hurt in Rizal

- [Zambales town strengthens beach safety for Holy Week tourists](#) (2026-04-02 14:31)

SAN ANTONIO, Zambales — As thousands of tourists are expected to visit this province's beaches during Holy Week, the municipal government of nearby San Narciso town has rolled out a Centralized Lifeguard System to strengthen safety along the coastline. The initiative is a collaborative effort between the local government and private stakeholders to ensure the

- [CBCP urges smokers to quit: Not easy, but possible](#) (2026-04-02 14:20)

MANILA, Philippines — The Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) on Maundy Thursday urged Filipino smokers to stop vaping and smoking, emphasizing that liberation from nicotine might not be easy, but it is possible. CBCP Health Care Commission executive secretary Fr. Dan Cancino Jr. sounded an alarm on the prevalence of vaping and smoking

- [LIST: Power interruptions on Maundy Thursday, April 2](#) (2026-04-02 14:14)

MANILA, Philippines — The Manila Electric Co. (Meralco) announced that several areas in Caloocan, Marikina, and Batangas may experience power interruptions on Maundy Thursday due to maintenance works. According to its website, below are the areas possibly affected by the interruptions. READ: Meralco: No scheduled 3-month long brownouts Caloocan In Caloocan, power interruptions are likely

- [Holy Week 2026: Illegal entry resurfaces on Mt. Banahaw](#) (2026-04-02 14:10)

LUCENA CITY, Quezon — Despite the government ban, unauthorized pilgrims, hikers, and nature trippers have again entered restricted areas of Mount Banahaw in Quezon province since the start of the Lenten season, sources said. "If not for the fire on Sunday at 'Dungaw Peak,' the renewed illegal entry into the sacred mountain would not have

- [Flooding fuels call for mangrove shields in Bulacan](#) (2026-04-02 14:05)

MANILA, Philippines — After months of recurring floods that persist even on clear days, coastal communities in Bulacan are calling for the protection and restoration of mangroves, which they describe as a frontline defense against worsening inundation. At a public forum, residents, local officials and civil society groups urged Congress to pass the proposed National

- [Samar stretch of Maharlika Highway reopens for Holy Week](#) (2026-04-02 14:00)

TACLOBAN CITY — The Samar section of the Maharlika Highway has been reopened to two-way traffic on Wednesday, April 1, restoring unimpeded travel just in time for the expected surge of travelers during the Holy Week, the regional office of the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) said. The reopening, covering key portions of

- [NCRPO: P4-M shabu seized, 72 suspects arrested in Metro Manila sweep](#) (2026-04-02 13:14)

MANILA, Philippines — More than ₱4 million worth of illegal drugs were seized and 72 suspected drug offenders were arrested in a sweeping one-day anti-drug operation across Metro Manila. The National Capital Region Police Office (NCRPO) conducted coordinated operations from 6 a.m. on April 1 to 5:59 a.m. on April 2. This led to the

- [8 seized luxury cars tied to Zaldy Co transferred to BOC compound](#) (2026-04-02 13:14)

MANILA, Philippines — The eight luxury cars worth P143 million allegedly linked to former lawmaker Zaldy Co were transferred to the compound of the Bureau of Customs (BOC) on Wednesday after being temporarily placed at the facility of the Independent Commission on Infrastructure (ICI). The vehicles were stored at the compound of ICI in Taguig

- [Jellyfish spotted along Zambales coast, authorities warn](#) (2026-04-02 13:07)

SAN ANTONIO, Zambales — Local authorities have issued a warning to beachgoers in San Felipe town after several jellyfish were spotted along parts of the coastline on Holy Thursday, April 2, as tourists continue to flock to the area's beaches for the Holy Week break. In an advisory, officials said multiple jellyfish were seen along

- [EcoWaste's Holy Week reminder: Don't litter at pilgrimage sites](#) (2026-04-02 13:00)

MANILA, Philippines — This Holy Week, waste and pollution watchdog EcoWaste Coalition has urged the public not to litter at pilgrimage sites or commit other acts that can harm the environment, emphasizing that “cleanliness is next to godliness.” READ: Black veils, bare feet: Holy Week women embody grief “Pilgrimage sites are not dumpsites,” the group

- [UPLB Bio-N exclusivity deal blamed for biofertilizer program's failure](#) (2026-04-02 12:44)

MANILA, Philippines — With fertilizer prices rising as conflict in the Middle East rattles global supply, farmer advocates said a locally developed biofertilizer meant to help cut farming costs has failed to cushion Filipino farmers largely because the University of the Philippines Los Baños granted a private firm exclusive rights to commercialize and distribute Bio-N.

- [OIL PRICE WATCH as of April 2, 2026](#) (2026-04-02 11:56)

MANILA, Philippines – As Filipinos observe Maundy Thursday, attention is also focused on unrelenting rising costs of fuel, which continues to weigh heavily on transport workers and household budgets. Motorists and commuters alike are bracing for a possible adjustments next week amid the ongoing Middle East crisis. Below are the prevailing prices monitored and gathered

- [Puerto Galera: Fare hikes, new protocol impact tourist arrivals](#) (2026-04-02 11:45)

PUERTO GALERA, Oriental Mindoro – The recent fare increases brought by the rising prices of petroleum products had heavily impacted tourist arrivals in this popular summer destination, a resort manager said. Gloria Basconcillo of the White Beach Resort Bar and Restaurant said that compared to last year, arrivals this summer of 2026 are lesser. “Compared

- [Cardinal Advincula to priests: Tackle mental health struggles](#) (2026-04-02 11:43)

MANILA, Philippines — Manila Archbishop Jose Cardinal Advincula encouraged fellow members of the clergy to confront and address their mental and emotional challenges, noting that about 18 percent of Filipino priests reported psychological distress in a recent survey. “Recently, many priests have reported episodes of depression, anxiety, loneliness, grief, burnout and compassion fatigue,” he said

- [M/V Starlite Saga given special permit to operate on Batangas-Calapan](#) (2026-04-02 11:38)

MANILA, Philippines — The M/V Starlite Saga has been granted a special permit by the Maritime Industry Authority (Marina) to service the Batangas-Calapan route and vice versa to address the shortage of vessels following the suspension of operations of OceanJet vessels on the same route. Marina said it approved the special permit for the vessel

- [De Lima pushes expansion of free PUV rides amid fuel crisis](#) (2026-04-02 11:29)

MANILA, Philippines — The service contracting program for public utility vehicles (PUVs), which provides commuters free rides, should be expanded to ease the impact of the fuel price crisis on both drivers and passengers, Mamamayang Liberal Party-list Rep. Leila de Lima said. In a statement released on Wednesday, De Lima said she has filed House Resolution

- [From US, Filipina grandma always returns to uphold Holy Week tradition](#) (2026-04-02 11:10)

MANILA, Philippines — A 75-year-old Filipina grandmother is now living a comfortable life with her family in New York City, United States. But as the season that welcomes Holy Week arrives, she always finds a way to come home to the Philippines and continue their tradition — a way to show faith and love for

- [Marcos reminds faithful of selfless service on Maundy Thursday](#) (2026-04-02 10:44)

MANILA, Philippines — President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. highlighted the importance of selfless services as the Filipino faithful observe Maundy Thursday. “On this Holy Thursday, we are reminded that leadership begins with service. Caring for others and putting their needs before our own,” Marcos said in a social media post Thursday morning. READ: WATCH:

- [CICC: Possible Roblox ban in PH hinges on April 7 meeting](#) (2026-04-02 10:37)

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippine government may push through with its threat of shutting down popular gaming platform Roblox in the country if it fails to meet stricter child safety requirements during a scheduled meeting with authorities on April 7, an official said on

Wednesday. In an interview on state-run PTV, Cybercrime Investigation and Coordinating Center

- [DepEd to conduct orientations on the new 3-term school calendar](#) (2026-04-02 10:21)

MANILA, Philippines — The Department of Education (DepEd) will hold orientation sessions among school heads, teachers, and other stakeholders about the implementation of the three-term school calendar. The shift will be implemented among public schools beginning School Year 2026-2027. Under this new three-term school calendar, there will only be three grading periods instead of the

- [Dole tells employers: Comply with pay rules for April holidays](#) (2026-04-02 09:31)

MANILA, Philippines — The Department of Labor and Employment (Dole) has reminded all employers to comply with proper payment rules in observance of the regular holidays and special non-working holiday for the month of April this year. This is in line with Labor Advisory No. 05, Series of 2026, or the Payment of Wages for

- [WATCH: Churches hold special Maundy Thursday services](#) (2026-04-02 09:07)

MANILA, Philippines – Filipino Catholics are expected to flock churches on Maundy Thursday to observe the Last Supper and the traditional washing of the feet. Many Christian sects are also observing this Holy tradition. Churches across the country are set to hold afternoon and evening liturgies. Some will remain open for extended hours to accommodate

- [Phivolcs: No tsunami threat to PH after a 7.4M quake hits Indonesia](#) (2026-04-02 08:10)

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology on Thursday said there is no tsunami threat to the Philippines following a strong offshore earthquake in Indonesia. “There is no tsunami threat to the Philippines from this earthquake,” Phivolcs said. A magnitude 7.4 quake struck eastern Indonesia early Thursday, according to the United States

- [Pagasa: Easterlies to bring warm, mostly fair weather on Maundy Thursday](#) (2026-04-02 07:53)

MANILA, Philippines — Warm and generally fair weather will prevail across much of the country on Maundy Thursday due to easterlies, with brief isolated rains possible, according to the state weather bureau. In its latest weather bulletin, the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) said the easterlies are currently affecting Southern Luzon, Visayas,

- [Dole: No minimum wage hike for May 1](#) (2026-04-02 05:41)

MANILA, Philippines — There will be no minimum wage increase on May 1, Department of Labor and Employment (Dole) Undersecretary Benedicto Ernesto Bitonio Jr. said on Wednesday as he stressed that future adjustments will remain under the authority of the Regional Tripartite Wages and Productivity Boards (RTWPBs). Absent a new law that mandates an across-the-board

- [Where priests train for battles of ‘Liberation’](#) (2026-04-02 05:41)

MANILA, Philippines — At first glance, the white three-story structure along St. Bernardino Street at Barangay Guadalupe Viejo, Makati City, looks just like any other modern office building, with its large windows and glass doors that open to a spacious lobby. But within its walls is a training ground for a spiritual battle that has

- [PH rice tariff policy may slow down imports](#) (2026-04-02 05:40)

MANILA, Philippines — Industry sources said the government’s recent price-index tariff policy may weaken rice imports, triggering market speculation and resulting in higher prices, a report from the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) said. The USDA report titled “Philippines: Grain and Feed Annual” was released in March and said rising farm input costs, particularly for

- [DSWD offers aid to girl who wrote to Marcos](#) (2026-04-02 05:38)

MANILA, Philippines — Social Welfare Secretary Rex Gatchalian said on Wednesday that authorities have already located the 11-year-old girl from Tinambac, Camarines Sur, who asked President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. for protection against the alleged abuses committed by a barangay councilor and his sons. “In accordance with the directive of the President, we will assist the

- [Marcos: All Kalayaan Island Group features must have Filipino names](#) (2026-04-02 05:36)

MANILA, Philippines — President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. has ordered the adoption of Philippine names for the 131 maritime features in the Kalayaan Island Group (KIG) in the West Philippine Sea (WPS) to reinforce its sovereignty in the area. KIG lies on the western section of the disputed Spratly Islands in the South China Sea, but

- [Chavez claims prompt reflection on history of Filipino farmworkers in US](#) (2026-04-02 05:34)

CALIFORNIA — Filipino and Mexican American farmworkers united in 1965 to strike against California grape growers, under the stewardship of Filipino labor leader Larry Itliong and one of the founders of the National Farm Workers Association, César Chavez. It was a pivotal moment that has been highlighted in books, monuments and even a stage musical.

- [Iran asked to count PH as ‘nonhostile’ nation](#) (2026-04-02 05:32)

MANILA, Philippines — The government has asked Iran to classify the Philippines as a “nonhostile” country in relation to the Middle East conflict, as Manila initiated talks to secure safe passage for Philippine-bound oil tankers through the Strait of Hormuz, a waterway crucial to global supply lines now controlled by Tehran. The request was made

- [200 bullets seized from Holy Week travelers in airports](#) (2026-04-02 05:31)

MANILA, Philippines — Around 200 bullets have so far been confiscated in airports across the country from passengers traveling during Holy Week, according to the Office for Transportation Security (OTS). OTS Administrator Undersecretary Gilberto Cruz reported this on Wednesday as he conducted a security inspection at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (Naia) Terminal 3 on

- [Senate panel pushes fuel rationing, other crisis measures](#) (2026-04-02 05:30)

MANILA, Philippines — The head of the ad hoc Senate committee formed in the wake of the Middle East conflict said the panel had recommended several measures to help Filipinos cope with the war's economic impact, such fuel rationing, price caps and a monthly financial aid for minimum wage earners, among others. Quoting the panel's

- [In Pangasinan, grand views of nature, faith in Holy Week](#) (2026-04-02 05:15)

ALAMINOS CITY, PANGASINAN, Philippines — Climbing the 263-step stairway leading to the 16.76-meter statue of Jesus Christ the Savior on Pilgrimage Island can be physically demanding, especially under the scorching sun. But despite the sweat and fatigue, the ascent is rewarding as atop, one is treated to a spectacular 360-degree view of Hundred Islands National

- [House asked to pass bill formalizing support for Filipinos with autism](#) (2026-04-01 23:46)

MANILA, Philippines — A lawmaker has asked his colleagues in the House of Representatives to pass a bill that would formalize the support system for Filipinos with autism, as the country commemorates World Autism Awareness Day on April 2. In a statement on Wednesday, Quezon City Rep. Patrick Michael Vargas said that he has filed

- [Mayon Volcano's lava fountaining continues](#) (2026-04-01 23:43)

MANILA, Philippines — Mayon Volcano on Wednesday continued to exhibit lava fountaining, said the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs). According to Phivolcs in an advisory, Mayon's latest "short-lived" spew of lava occurred at 05:49 p.m. Meanwhile, Phivolcs declared that Mayon Volcano's effusive eruption has now entered its 85th consecutive day. An effusive eruption

- [Guimaras braces for crowds in 'Taltal sa Balaan Bukid' on Good Friday](#) (2026-04-01 23:32)

JORDAN, GUIMARAS, Philippines — The local government of Jordan town in Guimaras province has said it is fully prepared for the staging of the "Taltal sa Jordan, Guimaras," scheduled to take place next week on Good Friday, April 3. According to Jordan Mayor John Edward Gando, the religious activity will commence at noon on Good Friday.

- [LGU in Lucban, Quezon scraps Easter Sunday festival due to energy crisis](#) (2026-04-01 23:15)

LUCENA CITY, QUEZON, Philippines — The local government of Lucban in Quezon province has canceled its annual “Buhusan Festival,” a popular Easter Sunday event, in support of the declared national energy emergency. In a public notice posted on its official Facebook page, the municipal government said the move was made “in compliance with the current

- [Probable cause stage of Duterte impeachment hearings may end in April](#) (2026-04-01 23:08)

MANILA, Philippines — The House committee on justice could complete the probable cause stage of the impeachment proceedings against Vice President Sara Duterte as early as April and elevate the case to the plenary once Congress resumes session, Bukidnon 2nd District Rep. Jonathan Keith Flores said. Flores, vice chair of the justice panel, said the

- [When prayer takes color: A Holy Week encounter with God through art](#) (2026-04-01 23:02)

CALAPAN CITY, ORIENTAL MINDORO, Philippines — “Sometimes, prayer is not only spoken—it is painted.” In a quiet corner of Barangay Suqui during Holy Week, prayer will take on a different form—one that does not rely on words, but on colors, lines, and silence. On Holy Monday, the Oriental Mindoro Medical Society Building and St. Augustine

- [Apo Ino: The story of faith, devotion in Zambales town](#) (2026-04-01 22:32)

SAN ANTONIO, ZAMBALES, Philippines — In this coastal town, where traditions pass gently from one generation to the next, Holy Wednesday brings a powerful expression of faith as families and neighbors gather to honor the image of the Nazarene, one of the central figures in Holy Week processions. Each year, the Asinas-Rivera clan in Barangay

- [DepEd celebrates triumph over adversity in inspiring graduation stories](#) (2026-04-01 22:32)

MAKATI CITY, Philippines — From a 33-year-old mother mastering her ABCs alongside her child to a visually impaired lawyer returning to his alma mater, this year’s graduation season has become a canvas for stories of radical resilience. The Department of Education (DepEd) highlighted these milestones as proof that age and disability are no barriers to

- [Roadside explosive incident in Maguindanao del Sur ‘under control’ – PNP](#) (2026-04-01 22:30)

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippine National Police (PNP) on Wednesday assured the public that the roadside explosive incident in Maguindanao del Sur is already “under control.” The PNP issued the statement after a roadside bomb set off by still unidentified men caused minor damage to a police patrol car in Rajah Buayan, Maguindanao del Sur,

- [PCSO’s Grand, Mega jackpots roll over in April 1 draw](#) (2026-04-01 22:20)

MANILA, Philippines — No bettor won the jackpot prizes for Grand Lotto 6/55 and MegaLotto 6/45 in the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office draw on Wednesday, April 1. According to the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office, the winning combination for Grand Lotto 6/55 was

32-42-17-55-50-19 for a jackpot of P45 million. No ticket matched all six numbers.

- [Groups, fishers in Verde Island Passage seek fuel subsidy](#) (2026-04-01 22:11)

LUCENA CITY, Quezon — Fisherfolk and environmental advocates on Wednesday called on the national government to provide immediate fuel subsidies to fishermen in the Verde Island Passage (VIP) amid rising fuel costs. “We urge the national government not to turn a blind eye to the struggles of the fisherfolk sector and to provide immediate and

- [Tawi-Tawi town declares state of emergency over fuel shortage](#) (2026-04-01 21:57)

PAGADIAN CITY, Zamboanga del Sur — Mayor Jasper Que of Bongao town in Tawi-Tawi province on Wednesday declared a state of local emergency following a crippling shortage of fuel that has disrupted transport, fishing and the delivery of essential services. The declaration, contained in Executive Order No. 22, Series of 2026, signed on April 1,

- [Nordeco workers seek co-existence, oppose Davao Light takeover](#) (2026-04-01 21:15)

SAN FRANCISCO, Agusan del Sur — In a move to safeguard jobs and public service, organized workers of the Northern Davao Electric Cooperative (Nordeco) are pushing for a peaceful co-existence arrangement with Davao Light and Power Company (DLPC), rejecting a full takeover as proposed by Davao del Norte Gov. Edwin Jubahib. The Nordeco Employees Care

- [Church, NGOs oppose private takeover of hydro plants](#) (2026-04-01 20:53)

ILIGAN CITY – The leadership of the Catholic Church here has joined nongovernment organizations in sounding the alarm bells about the national government’s plan to hand over operations of the Agus and Pulangi hydroelectric power plants. In a position paper obtained by the Inquirer, which was circulated for signatures of support, Bishop Jose Rapadas III,

- [38 families relocated to Laguna for NSCR Extension project](#) (2026-04-01 20:28)

MANILA, Philippines — Thirty-eight families affected by the construction of the North-South Commuter Railway (NSCR) Extension project have been relocated to San Pedro, Laguna, the Department of Transportation (DOTr) said on Wednesday. According to the DOTr, the families welcomed their new homes on Tuesday. The DOTr noted that they are the first batch of the

- [LOOK: Holy Week exodus in Iloilo City](#) (2026-04-01 20:19)

Thousands queue for buses en route to northern Panay. READ: PNP tells motorists: Keep your cool on the road amid Holy Week rush The massive influx of commuters comes as many head back to their respective hometowns for the Holy Week. They are expected to be back in droves on Sunday. /jpv

- [Pagasa: 2 areas may reach ‘danger’ heat index Thursday](#) (2026-04-01 20:10)

MANILA, Philippines — At least two areas in the country — Virac, Catanduanes and Mambusao, Capiz — are expected to reach “danger” level heat indices on Maundy Thursday, the state

weather bureau said. According to the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical, and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa), heat index is defined as the “measure of the contribution that

- [Pagasa: Virac, Catanduanes logs 47°C heat index for second straight day](#) (2026-04-01 19:57)

MANILA, Philippines – A peak heat index of 47°C was recorded in Virac (Synop), Catanduanes on Holy Wednesday, the state weather bureau said. Heat index, as defined by the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical, and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa), is the “measure of the contribution that high humidity makes with abnormally high temperatures in reducing the body’s

- [Ridon warns vs fuel rationing talks: Might scare people into hoarding](#) (2026-04-01 19:46)

MANILA, Philippines — Bicol Saro party-list Rep. Terry Ridon has sounded an alarm over discussions of fuel rationing, as it may prompt people into panic-buying or hoarding gasoline and diesel even if supplies were reported to be enough for at least 50 days. Ridon in an online interview on Wednesday was asked regarding Sen. Sherwin Gatchalian’s

- [MRT-3 offers free rides to Filipino veterans from April 6-11](#) (2026-04-01 19:43)

MANILA, Philippines — The Metro Rail Transit (MRT-3) will offer free rides to all Filipino veterans from April 6-11, 2026. READ: ‘Solution to war is not more war,’ Marcos says in Day of Valor speech In line with President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.’s Proclamation No. 727, April 9 or Araw ng Kagitingan (Day of Valor) is

- [Pagasa urges water conservation amid dry season](#) (2026-04-01 19:32)

MANILA, Philippines – The Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) on Wednesday urged the public to conserve water as the country enters the dry season. READ: Pagasa announces start of ‘warm and dry season’ On March 23, Pagasa officially announced the onset of the warm and dry season, marked by reduced rainfall and higher

- [Pangasinan, UNDP join hands to build community resilience](#) (2026-04-01 19:24)

LINGAYEN, Pangasinan – The provincial government of Pangasinan inked a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) for the implementation of a project aimed at building the resilience of communities and institutions to disasters and climate change. Pangasinan is one of the 10 provinces selected under the Strengthening Institutions and Empowering

- [Flood control case: Sandiganbayan upholds denial of bail for DPWH execs](#) (2026-04-01 18:55)

MANILA, Philippines — The Sandiganbayan has denied the appeals of nine former public works officials from the Mimaropa region seeking reconsideration of their bail application in the

malversation case involving resigned fugitive Ako Bicol Rep. Elizaldy Co over a substandard flood control project in Oriental Mindoro. In a 27-page resolution dated March 31, the Sandiganbayan's

- [La Mesa Ecopark taps youth power for Int'l Day of Forests 2026](#) (2026-04-01 18:48)

MANILA, Philippines – La Mesa Ecopark, in partnership with Make Difference (MAD) Earth and the Sangguniang Kabataan officials from five barangays in Quezon City, recently celebrated the International Day of Forests at the Eco Academy in La Mesa Ecopark. Established by the United Nations in 2012, the International Day of Forests highlights the vital role

- [PNP: 16,784 arrested in anti-drug ops in first 3 months of 2026](#) (2026-04-01 18:42)

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippine National Police (PNP) on Wednesday said it has so far made 16,784 arrests in anti-illegal drug operations in 2026, seizing over P11 billion worth of illegal drugs. According to the PNP, the arrests stemmed from the 14,550 anti-illegal drug operations conducted from January 1 to March 30, 2026. READ: 172

- [232 cops dismissed in Q1 as PNP intensifies internal purge](#) (2026-04-01 18:28)

MANILA, Philippines – A total of 232 police officers were dismissed from service in the first three months of the year over various infractions, the Philippine National Police (PNP) said Wednesday, as it stepped up internal disciplinary measures. READ: Over 2,500 PNP personnel dismissed, suspended in 2025 The dismissals were part of administrative sanctions imposed on

- [Duterte impeachment: Public should monitor 'overdue' hearings — Cendaña](#) (2026-04-01 18:09)

MANILA, Philippines — Akbayan party-list Rep. Percival Cendaña has urged the public to monitor the upcoming House hearings on the impeachment complaints against Vice President Sara Duterte, saying the proceedings have been “long overdue” due to the respondent's repeated evasion of accountability measures. In an interview on Wednesday, Cendaña said they expect Ramil Madriaga, Duterte's former

- [12 hours in line, one year apart: A mother's journey home](#) (2026-04-01 18:00)

MANILA, Philippines — Even if a 40-year-old passenger had to wait for over 12 hours at a terminal in Quezon City, she could not hide her excitement to reunite with her children in the province after a year. Catherine Nano had been at the Superlines terminal as early as 6:30 a.m. to catch a ride

- [DA: PH has fertilizer supply, alternatives amid Middle East tension](#) (2026-04-01 17:42)

MANILA, Philippines — The Department of Agriculture (DA) on Wednesday assured the public that the country has sufficient fertilizer supply and viable alternatives, amid fears of a potential shortage caused by rising prices and threats to global supply routes stemming from the conflict in the Middle East. In a statement, Agriculture Sec. Francisco Tiu Laurel

- [Bataan cops held for failing to recapture 2 suspects who escaped custody](#) (2026-04-01 16:49)

MANILA, Philippines — Two Bataan police officers were arrested for failing to recapture two carnapping suspects who escaped custody, the Police Regional Office Central Luzon (PRO 3) reported. The two cops, a police chief master sergeant and a police senior master sergeant, confessed during their station's inspection on Tuesday morning that they lost the two

- [Instead of fare hike, Kidapawan grants trike drivers P1,000 fuel subsidy](#) (2026-04-01 16:35)

KORONADAL CITY, South Cotabato – The Kidapawan City government in Cotabato province rejected calls for a fare hike, but will extend a P1,000 monthly fuel subsidy for each tricycle driver until December this year to help them parry the blows of skyrocketing fuel prices caused by the war in the Middle East. Kidapawan Mayor Jose

- [Teen rushes to return home to reunite with ailing grandma](#) (2026-04-01 16:01)

MANILA, Philippines — As many Filipinos return to their provinces for Holy Week this year, an 18-year-old student is eager to go home to spend time with her ailing grandmother. In an interview with the Inquirer on Holy Wednesday, Princess Dianela said she was not supposed to return to Cabanatuan, Nueva Ecija, until Saturday, April 4, but

- [PNP finds P38.6-M drugs inside ‘abandoned’ parcels at Pasay mail hub](#) (2026-04-01 15:50)

MANILA, Philippines — Packs of suspected shabu (crystal meth) worth P38.6 million were discovered inside three “abandoned” inbound parcels at the Central Mail Exchange Center in Pasay City, the Philippine National Police (PNP) said on Wednesday. The parcels were flagged during an inspection by the Ninoy Aquino International Airport Inter-agency Interdiction Task Group on Tuesday,

- [33 PUV drivers test positive for drug use amid Holy Week rush](#) (2026-04-01 15:47)

MANILA, Philippines — At least 33 public utility vehicle (PUV) drivers in four regions have tested positive for drug use during the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency's (PDEA) random drug testing for the Holy Week rush. In separate statements on Wednesday, PDEA regional offices reported the following numbers of PUV drivers who were tested and those

- [Massage therapist nabbed for filming client in Parañaque](#) (2026-04-01 15:34)

MANILA, Philippines — A 29-year-old massage therapist was arrested Tuesday in Parañaque for allegedly attempting to secretly video-record a female client undressing inside a mall spa. Police identified the suspect, known by the alias “Jun-Jun” and a resident of Pasay City, who was apprehended around 2:30 p.m., at a spa on the second floor of

- [Caap urges air travelers to follow dangerous goods regulations](#) (2026-04-01 15:21)

MANILA, Philippines — The Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippines (Caap) on Wednesday urged all air travelers to comply with dangerous goods regulations to ensure a safe flight and avoid penalties during Holy Week. According to Caap, dangerous goods are globally regulated by the International Civil Aviation Organization. These items may pose risks to the

- [PNP tells motorists: Keep your cool on the road amid Holy Week rush](#) (2026-04-01 15:11)

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippine National Police (PNP) has urged motorists to “keep their cool” while traveling during this year’s Holy Week rush. “Don’t let road rage ruin your plans for the Holy Week. Let us all set a good example on the road, especially since most motorists are traveling with their children and family,”

- [Passenger surge seen on Holy Wednesday with half-day work](#) (2026-04-01 15:02)

MANILA, Philippines — Two bus terminals in Quezon City are expecting more passengers from Wednesday afternoon to evening after Malacañang ordered a half-day work schedule in government offices in observance of the Holy Week. At Victory Liner, dispatcher John Peter Ranches said 82 buses had been deployed, carrying about

- [PNP: Suspect in alleged rape of CamSur student’s sister jailed in 2023](#) (2026-04-01 14:48)

MANILA, Philippines — A suspect in the alleged rape of a Camarines Sur student’s sister had already been jailed for the incident in 2023, according to the Philippine National Police (PNP). The case gained traction after the sister, an 11-year-old student, walked out of her graduation on Monday to petition the town’s vice mayor to

- [Influx of last-minute travelers seen to boost PITX ridership](#) (2026-04-01 14:11)

MANILA, Philippines — Travelers are urged to arrive early at the bus terminal to avoid heavier crowds on Holy Wednesday, the last working day of Holy Week, as last-minute travelers are expected to push ridership at the Parañaque Integrated Terminal Exchange (PITX) to 200,000. Millions from Metro Manila are expected to return to their hometowns during

- [Cops escape roadside bombing in Maguindanao del Sur](#) (2026-04-01 14:06)

COTABATO CITY — A roadside bomb set off by still unidentified men caused minor damage to a police patrol car responding to a reported bomb explosion in Rajah Buayan, Maguindanao del Sur, on Wednesday morning, April 1. Capt. Steffi Salanguit, speaking for the Police Regional Office-Bangsamoro Autonomous Region (PRO-BAR), said no police officers on board

- [PNP tells commanders: Clear road obstructions or be relieved](#) (2026-04-01 14:04)

MANILA, Philippines — Police commanders who fail to clear major thoroughfares from obstructions amid the travel rush this Holy Week will be relieved from their posts, the Philippine National Police (PNP) said on Wednesday. PNP chief Gen. Jose Melencio Nartatez Jr. gave the instruction after inspecting the areas surrounding the Baclaran and Quiapo churches and

- [Authorities find girl who sought Marcos' help vs village councilor](#) (2026-04-01 14:02)

MANILA, Philippines — Authorities have located the 11-year-old girl from Camarines Sur who wrote to President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. seeking help against an abusive village official, Social Welfare Secretary Rex Gatchalian said Wednesday. Gatchalian said he met with the girl and the head of the Redeemer Homeless Mission, the nonprofit currently caring for her and other

- [PH maternal mortality declines, but still short of SDG target](#) (2026-04-01 14:01)

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippines has made measurable gains in maternal health in recent years, but experts say progress remains fragile and uneven, especially for newborns and young children whose earliest years shape a lifetime of outcomes. At the center of the conversation is a growing consensus: Without stronger alignment across policies, programs and providers,

- [Gatchalian: Fuel saving must start with politicians not using convoys](#) (2026-04-01 14:01)

MANILA, Philippines – Politicians should stop using convoys to help reduce fuel consumption in the face of global supply shortage due to the ongoing conflict in the Middle East. “Stop doing convoys and using escorts. I think they should conserve for now and avoid having escorts,” Sen. Sherwin Gatchalian, chairman of the Senate proactive

- [OIL PRICE WATCH as of April 1, 2026](#) (2026-04-01 14:00)

MANILA, Philippines – Fuel prices continue to soar as the Middle East conflict escalates at the start of the Holy Week. Oil companies on Monday announced price increases for diesel (P12.50 to P12.90 per liter) and gasoline (P1 to P2.50 a liter). Below are the prevailing prices monitored and gathered by the Inquirer team as

- [P15.75-M undocumented cigarettes seized in Mobo, Masbate — PCG](#) (2026-04-01 13:45)

LEGAZPI CITY — The Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) District Bicol seized 630 boxes of undocumented cigarettes worth an estimated P15.75 million during a routine inspection at Mobo Port in Masbate. Commodore Ivan Roldan, PCG District Bicol commander, told the Inquirer in a Viber message on Wednesday that the seizure took place on Tuesday (March 31)

- [17 hurt as vehicle plunges into ravine in Kalinga](#) (2026-04-01 13:42)

ROXAS, Isabela – Seventeen people, including six minors, were injured after a utility vehicle plunged into a 30-meter ravine in Lubuagan town, Kalinga province on Tuesday, March 31. Investigators said on Wednesday that the vehicle, driven by Arcadio Accoy, suffered a brake malfunction and fell at around 4 p.m. while negotiating the Poway–Ag-agama Upper Uma

- [Sara Duterte impeachment: Madriaga' s security now more crucial — Adiong](#) (2026-04-01 12:57)

MANILA, Philippines — The security of Ramil Madriaga, Vice President Sara Duterte' s former aide, is now more crucial as he is set to face impeachment proceedings as a possible witness, according to Lanao del Sur Rep. Zia Alonto Adiong. In a Wednesday statement, Adiong said they

expect a report from the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI)

- [PNP chief inspects churches, trains for Holy Week travel rush](#) (2026-04-01 12:45)

MANILA, Philippines — Philippine National Police (PNP) chief, Gen. Jose Melencio Nartatez Jr. on Wednesday conducted inspections of the police's preparations in several areas across Metro Manila amid the influx of travelers for this year's Holy Week. Nartatez made the rounds first at Baclaran Church in Pasay City, then the Light Rail Transit Line 1

- [172 rape, sexual abuse suspects arrested in a month — CIDG](#) (2026-04-01 12:31)

MANILA, Philippines—The Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG) arrested 172 individuals accused of rape and sexual abuse in a nationwide March crackdown marking National Women's Month. It resulted in the capture of fugitives facing charges such as rape, statutory rape, acts of lasciviousness, and qualified rape of a minor through sexual assault. CIDG Director Maj.

- [Gatchalian bats for continued MRT, LRT discounts, Libreng Sakay](#) (2026-04-01 12:21)

MANILA, Philippines — Both the Metro Rail Transit Line 3 (MRT-3) and the Light Rail Transit Line 2 (LRT-2) should continue providing discounts to commuters so that their expenses would be reduced amid high fuel prices and calls for fare hikes, Senator Sherwin Gatchalian said on Wednesday. Gatchalian, in the preliminary report he made after two

- [Over 3,000 personnel deployed to ensure safe Eastern Visayas summer](#) (2026-04-01 12:19)

TACLOBAN CITY — Over 3,000 security and support personnel have been deployed across Eastern Visayas as part of intensified measures to ensure public safety during the peak summer travel season, the Philippine National Police (PNP) regional office here said. The Police Regional Office 8 (PRO-8), led by Brig. Gen. Jason Capoy launched the annual Ligtas

- [35 gas stations in Bicol temporarily closed amid several issues](#) (2026-04-01 12:01)

LEGAZPI CITY — At least 35 gasoline stations across the Bicol region were temporarily closed as of Wednesday, March 31. Data from the Police Regional Office showed that 35 of the 835 monitored gas stations in the region have ceased operations due to depleted fuel supply, permit issues, and ongoing renovations. Brig. Gen. Erosito Miranda,

- [April Fools: Best pranks leave everyone laughing with – not at – you](#) (2026-04-01 11:45)

MANILA, Philippines — Every year on April 1, people around the world take part in April Fools' Day. It is a day dedicated to jokes, playful tricks, and harmless mischief—or so they say... Not all pranks are funny, and some can have real consequences. For instance, fake pregnancy announcements can hurt feelings or spread confusion.

- [Surigao Sur restricts travel, consolidates trips to cut fuel use](#) (2026-04-01 11:10)

BUTUAN CITY – The provincial government of Surigao del Sur has implemented cost-saving protocols amid the ongoing increase in fuel costs, with measures covering official travel and moderation of costly activities to mitigate the effects of the energy crisis, officials announced Wednesday. “Guidelines were already approved on Tuesday that outline measures to ease the impacts of

- [200 bullets confiscated in PH airports so far this Holy Week, says OTS](#) (2026-04-01 11:06)

MANILA, Philippines — Around 200 bullets have been confiscated in airports across the country so far during this year’s Holy Week, according to the Office for Transportation Security (OTS). OTS Administrator Usec. Gilbert Cruz said this as the agency conducted a security inspection at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (Naia) Terminal 3 on Holy Wednesday,

- [Dole: No nationwide wage hike for May](#) (2026-04-01 10:58)

MANILA, Philippines – Minimum wage earners will not see a nationwide pay hike on May 1, as future adjustments remain region-based under the authority of the Regional Tripartite Wages and Productivity Boards (RTWPBs), the Department of Labor and Employment (Dole) secretary clarified Wednesday. Dole Secretary Bienvenido Laguesma explained that unless Congress enacts a law mandating

- [NCRPO sees no direct threat to security so far for Holy Week](#) (2026-04-01 10:30)

MANILA, Philippines — No direct threats to security in Metro Manila have been monitored so far amid the observance of Holy Week, the National Capital Region Police Office (NCRPO) said on Wednesday. NCRPO director, Maj. Gen. Anthony Aberin made this assessment as he, together with Quezon City Police District director Brig. Gen. Randy Silvio, inspected

- [Gatchalian pushes P1,500 monthly aid for minimum wage earners](#) (2026-04-01 10:19)

MANILA, Philippines — A P1,500 monthly aid for minimum wage earners, instead of an across-the-board wage hike, is being pushed by the Senate ad hoc committee chairperson as workers’ purchasing power have significantly decreased amid the crisis brought by the Middle East conflict. In his preliminary report, Sen. Sherwin Gatchalian who heads the Senate’s proactive response

- [PNP gets P506-M new personnel carriers, motorcycles, tools](#) (2026-04-01 09:54)

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippine National Police (PNP) has procured new vehicles, including personnel carriers, motorcycles and equipment worth a total of P506,996,656 for law enforcement operations. PNP Chief Gen. Jose Melencio Nartatez Jr. oversaw the blessing and turnover of the equipment in a ceremony in Camp Crame, Quezon City on Wednesday. Data shared by

- [PNP deploys team to probe abuse allegations vs CamSur local exec, sons](#) (2026-04-01 09:45)

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippine National Police (PNP) has deployed a team to investigate a student's claims that her sisters were sexually abused at the hands of a Tinambac, Camarines Sur barangay kagawad (councilor) and his sons. In a statement on Wednesday, PNP chief, Gen. Jose Melencio Nartatez Jr. detailed that he ordered a specialized

- [Over 44,000 passengers in ports early Holy Wednesday, says PCG](#) (2026-04-01 09:16)

MANILA, Philippines – Passenger traffic surged in ports nationwide on Holy Wednesday, April 1, as the Semana Santa exodus continued, following the high volume recorded the previous day. From midnight to 6 a.m., the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) reported 22,135 outbound passengers and 22,503 inbound travelers, totaling over 44,000 individuals moving through ports across the

- [Possible fuel price cap, rationing raised in Senate's initial report](#) (2026-04-01 09:06)

[Updated April 1, 2026, 10:46 a.m.] MANILA, Philippines — A possible price cap on petroleum products and the rationing of fuel were among the several proposed policy responses raised by the Senate's ad hoc committee's chairperson, in response to the crisis caused by the Middle East conflict. In the preliminary report released on Wednesday by Senate's

- [Black veils, bare feet: Holy Week women embody grief in Pampanga, Camarines Sur](#) (2026-04-01 08:00)

MANILA, Philippines — Across the Philippines, women have long played a central role in expressing sorrow. They wear black vestidas, veil themselves with manto, and sometimes give voice to pain through chants. But this role extends beyond personal loss. Every Holy Week, as the church remembers the death of Jesus, women in places such as

- [Fair, hot weather expected nationwide this Holy Wednesday](#) (2026-04-01 07:30)

MANILA, Philippines – Fair but hot and humid weather will prevail across the country this Holy Wednesday, April 1, according to the state weather bureau. The Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) said a ridge of a high-pressure area continues to extend over Northern Luzon. “The ridge of a high-pressure area is part

- [Most local governments underspend on primary healthcare – study](#) (2026-04-01 05:35)

Most local government units (LGUs) in the country are not spending enough to deliver basic but comprehensive primary healthcare (PHC) to their constituents, despite having sufficient fiscal resources arising from higher national tax shares, a state-run think tank found. In a recent study, the Philippine Institute for Development Studies (PIDS) said LGUs spend only about

- [Shipping firms can hike fares, cargo rates by only up to 30%](#) (2026-04-01 05:30)

Domestic shipping operators may increase passenger fares and cargo rates only by up to 30 percent, the Maritime Industry Authority (Marina) said in an advisory on Monday. The new limit is higher than the 20-percent increase granted by the agency on March 6. Marina said it will

release every week an advisory on rate adjustments

- [Terminal case: As fuel cost soars, car owners taking bus instead](#) (2026-04-01 05:25)

There has been an increase in passenger numbers during the Holy Week holidays amid the apparent trend of motorists choosing to travel by bus instead, according to the Parañaque Integrated Terminal Exchange (PITX). Fare discounts and other incentives to travelers have also been introduced by various stakeholders in the transportation sector, as fuel costs continue

- [BFP sacks Metro fire safety inspectors in antigraft drive](#) (2026-04-01 05:20)

The Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP) has relieved all fire safety inspectors (FSIs) in the National Capital Region (NCR) in line with an ongoing crackdown on corruption within the agency. “This move aims to set a new standard for transparency before expanding the program to other regions,” the BFP said in a statement on Tuesday.

- [Gov’ t sets P50 price cap for imported rice](#) (2026-04-01 05:00)

President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. on Tuesday announced a price ceiling of P50 per kilo for imported rice as part of government efforts to cushion the impact of rising fuel costs caused by the conflict in the Middle East. “When the price of oil goes up, food prices are next. That’ s something we don’ t want

- [PNP: Motorists who gas up and run face charges](#) (2026-04-01 04:55)

The Philippine National Police on Tuesday warned motorists against resorting to the “gas and run” scheme, saying they would face charges like the ride-hailing app driver who fled after gassing up in Quezon City but later surrendered to authorities. PNP chief Gen. Jose Melencio Nartatez Jr. said that the case, while it involved a single

- [‘Concerned employees’ sue DOH chief, other officials over P1.5-B expired drugs, vaccines](#) (2026-04-01 04:50)

Unidentified complainants calling themselves “concerned Department of Health [DOH] personnel” have again filed criminal and administrative cases against Health Secretary Teodoro Herbosa and 16 other officials and personnel of the agency, this time over P1.5 billion worth of vaccines and medicines that expired and were considered “dead stock.” The 33-page complaint accusing Herbosa and the

- [Zambales forestlands set for rehabilitation](#) (2026-04-01 04:35)

SAN ANTONIO, ZAMBALES— More than 74 hectares of degraded forestlands in San Marcelino and Subic towns are set for rehabilitation under a new five-year partnership between the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), Gala Aeta Kulihiig Association Inc. (Gakai), and AP Renewable Energy Corp. (Aprec). The three parties signed a memorandum of agreement to

- [Tighter security set at Quezon pilgrimage site during Holy Week](#) (2026-04-01 04:30)

LUCENA CITY — Pilgrims visiting the Kamay ni Hesus (KNH) shrine in Lucban, Quezon, this Holy Week will be subjected to tighter security measures amid escalating tensions in the Middle East.

“Due to ongoing conflict and potential retaliatory threats, including from terrorist groups, stricter security measures have been implemented,” said Fr. Joey Faller, shrine administrator, in

- [Catholic education leaders raise concerns over 3-term school calendar](#) (2026-04-01 00:02)

MANILA, Philippines — Catholic education leaders have raised doubts over the Department of Education’s (DepEd) planned transition to a three-term school calendar, citing risks to learning quality and system preparedness. In a recent statement, the Catholic Educational Association of the Philippines (CEAP) and the Catholic Bishop Conference of the Philippines Episcopal Commission on Catholic Education

- [With surge in fuel cost, Agusan Sur trike drivers’ income drop by half](#) (2026-03-31 22:49)

SAN FRANCISCO, Agusan del Sur – The ongoing oil crisis is putting a strain on the livelihood of tricycle drivers in this town, with their daily earnings dropping by almost half. Roel Gaano, a tricycle driver plying the Zone 1 route, which covers the six barangays in the town center, shared that before the fuel

- [No jackpot winners in 3 PCSO lotto draws on March 31, 2026](#) (2026-03-31 22:18)

MANILA, Philippines—No bettor won the jackpot in the Ultra Lotto 6/58, SuperLotto 6/49 and Lotto 6/42 draws held Tuesday, according to the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office. Ultra Lotto 6/58: 36-07-29-26-58-09; ₱75 million jackpot. SuperLotto 6/49: 22-42-18-28-08-17; ₱157.95 million jackpot. Lotto 6/42: 16-22-03-30-36-04; ₱10 million jackpot. In the minor games, PCSO said the 6D Lotto winning

- [Mayon Volcano’ s effusive eruption enters 84th day](#) (2026-03-31 22:10)

MANILA, Philippines — Mayon Volcano’ s effusive eruption is on its 84th consecutive day, the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs) said Tuesday. An effusive eruption is defined by Phivolcs as a type of eruption “dominated by the outpouring, fountaining or ejection of fluid lava.” Phivolcs made the pronouncement in an advisory after recording another

- [11-year-old asks Marcos: How can we read if we are being raped?](#) (2026-03-31 21:55)

MANILA, Philippines — “Mr. President, how will we read if we are being raped?” This was the question posed by an 11-year-old student to President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. as she sought protection and redress from sexual and other forms of injustices allegedly perpetrated by a barangay kagawad (village councilor) and his sons in Tinambac, Camarines Sur.

- [Town in Iloilo declares state of calamity over energy crisis](#) (2026-03-31 21:35)

ILOILO CITY—The municipality of Ajuy in Iloilo province has been placed under a state of calamity due to an energy emergency that has disrupted essential services and affected residents’ daily lives, local officials said. Ajuy Mayor Loida Espinosa announced the declaration on her social media page on Tuesday, March 31, citing Sangguniang Bayan Resolution No.

- [Suspected shabu lab discovered in Puerto Galera](#) (2026-03-31 21:06)

CALAPAN CITY, Oriental Mindoro — The Police Regional Office (PRO) in Mimaropa has intensified its anti-drug operations after discovering a suspected illegal drug laboratory in Puerto Galera, Oriental Mindoro, where authorities recovered shabu and materials linked to its manufacture. The operation began on March 29, when the Puerto Galera municipal police station received a report

- [Kuwait dream cut short: OFW returns home amid Middle East tensions](#) (2026-03-31 20:20)

MANILA, Philippines — A 27-year-old overseas Filipino worker (OFW) from La Union who sought work in Kuwait in hopes of giving his family a better life was forced to return to the Philippines after only five months due to ongoing tensions in the Middle East. Mark Deleña is among the 99 Filipinos who were safely

- [Bayanihan 3 not just aid as crisis differs from pandemic — Quimbo](#) (2026-03-31 20:13)

MANILA, Philippines — The new version of the Bayanihan bill will differ from its two predecessors because the current fuel price crisis is unlike the COVID-19 pandemic, which required total lockdowns, Marikina Rep. Miro Quimbo said on Tuesday. During an online press briefing, Quimbo clarified that under House Speaker Faustino “Bojie” Dy III’ s vision, Bayanihan 3

- [E-disbursement, better crisis response eyed in Bayanihan 3 bill](#) (2026-03-31 19:49)

MANILA, Philippines — One reform that the third Bayanihan bill may address is the tedious process of delivering financial assistance to the people, Marikina Rep. Miro Quimbo said on Tuesday. During a press briefing, Quimbo explained that not all problems during crises involve finding funding sources; issues also arise once funds are available, such as determining

- [P611 M ‘people’ s money’ recovered from flood control scam – DOJ](#) (2026-03-31 19:42)

MANILA, Philippines — The government has successfully recovered over P611 million in public funds linked to anomalous flood control projects. Justice Secretary Fredderick Vida made the announcement Tuesday during his report to the people. “As of today, a total of P611,381,500 has been recovered as part of the people’ s money in our attempt to recover

- [Holy Week returnee takes bus instead of car to save on fuel](#) (2026-03-31 19:07)

MANILA, Philippines — Garry Lorega and his wife will return to Naga City this Holy Week for the first time in four years. He is among the millions of Filipinos in Metro Manila who are expected to return to their hometowns during this major religious holiday. But unlike before, when he

and his family traveled

- [LTFRB: Drivers without fuel subsidy can now register via QR code](#) (2026-03-31 18:49)

MANILA, Philippines — The Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB) on Tuesday said drivers who have yet to receive their fuel subsidy may now register via a QR code to claim their payout. “In this way, it is no longer necessary to personally go to the agency’s office to register,” the LTFRB said

- [Expanded water sources strengthen Manila Water’s 24/7 supply for summer](#) (2026-03-31 18:48)

Manila Water Company assures its customers of continuous and reliable water service across the East Zone this Holy Week, supported by sustained investments in new and diversified water sources that strengthen system capacity during periods of high demand. With summer conditions coinciding with increased household water use during the Holy Week break, Manila Water confirms

- [ICI leaving it up to Marcos to release final report — Leviste](#) (2026-03-31 18:40)

The Independent Commission for Infrastructure (ICI) has submitted its final report to President Ferdinand Marcos Jr., leaving it to him to decide whether to release it to the public, Batangas 1st District Rep. Leandro Legarda Leviste said. Leviste also thanked ICI Chairman Andy Reyes for meeting with him at the commission’s offices, noting that ICI

- [Highway Patrol Group to deploy 170 cops for 48th Asean Leaders’ Summit](#) (2026-03-31 18:26)

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippine National Police Highway Patrol Group (PNP HPG) will be deploying 170 personnel for the 48th Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) Leaders’ Summit to be held in Cebu. The HPG’s personnel will “support security and traffic management operations,” the unit said in a statement on Tuesday. It further detailed that

- [PNP internal watchdog vows to intensify probes into erring cops](#) (2026-03-31 18:23)

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippine National Police Internal Affairs Service (PNP IAS) has vowed to intensify its investigations into erring police officers as part of a crackdown on personnel violating law enforcement rules and procedures. “The Internal Affairs Service fully supports the Chief PNP’s zero-tolerance policy. Our responsibility is to ensure that accountability is enforced

- [DPWH says Edsa rehab to go full swing from April 1 to 6](#) (2026-03-31 18:17)

MANILA, Philippines — The continued rehabilitation of the Epifanio delos Santos Avenue (Edsa) will run full swing starting Wednesday night, Public Works and Highways Secretary Vince Dizon announced on Tuesday. The road works will begin at 10 p.m. on Wednesday, April 1 and will run until 4 a.m. on Monday, April 6, Dizon detailed in

- [Heat index in Virac, Catanduanes forecast to hit 45°C on Holy Wednesday](#) (2026-03-31 18:16)

MANILA, Philippines — Dozens of areas are expected to log high levels of heat indices on Holy Wednesday, with Virac, Catanduanes forecast to hit a “danger” level peak of 45°C, the state weather bureau said. Heat index, as defined by the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical, and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa), is the “measure of the contribution

- [Adiong on impeach raps: Crisis not an excuse to stop constitutional duty](#) (2026-03-31 18:08)

MANILA, Philippines — The crisis on fuel prices should not be used as an excuse to skip constitutional duties, Lanao del Sur Rep. Zia Alonto Adiong said, reiterating the stand of several lawmakers that the House of Representatives can balance addressing problems and tackling impeachment complaints. Adiong, in a statement on Tuesday, said that the House

- [Marina raises price increase limit for ship fares, cargo rates to 30%](#) (2026-03-31 17:56)

MANILA, Philippines — Domestic shipping companies and operators may now impose a price increase of up to 30 percent for passenger fare and cargo freight rates amid rising fuel costs, according to an advisory by the Maritime Industry Authority (Marina). In an advisory issued on Monday, the maritime agency said it is allowing a maximum

- [Kababaihan lauds Sally Ujano’ s acquittal, urges wider justice access](#) (2026-03-31 17:38)

Kababaihan partylist welcomed the acquittal of women’ s and children’ s rights advocate Ma. Salome “Nanay Sally” Ujano on March 26, calling the Court of Appeals’ decision a meaningful step toward justice for individuals who struggle to be heard within the legal system. The group reiterated its ongoing support for women who face barriers in accessing justice,

- [Marcos approves P50/kilo price cap on imported rice](#) (2026-03-31 17:35)

MANILA, Philippines — President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. on Tuesday announced the approval of the proposed P50 per kilo price cap on imported rice, with an executive order set to follow. READ: Price council pushes P50 per kilo cap on imported rice “When the price of oil goes up, food prices follow. That’ s what we don’ t want

- [Maguindanao del Sur gov offers bounty for killers of 5 cops in ambush](#) (2026-03-31 17:34)

COTABATO CITY – Maguindanao del Sur Gov. Datu Ali Midtimbang has offered a P300,000 cash reward for anyone who can provide information leading to the identification and arrest of the suspects in the ambush-slay of five police officers in Shariff Aguak town on March 28. READ: 5 cops killed in Maguindanao del Sur ambush Speaking

- [Legarda boosts Congress-Bangsamoro coordination, advances reforms](#) (2026-03-31 17:30)

Sen. Loren Legarda reaffirmed her commitment to advancing peace, development, and inclusive governance in the Bangsamoro as she co-chaired the 4th Meeting of the Philippine Congress–Bangsamoro Parliament Forum (PCBPF), where key milestones were achieved to deepen institutional cooperation between the national government and the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM). A central outcome

- [Pamalakaya: Holy Week demand, oil costs to push fish prices up](#) (2026-03-31 17:26)

MANILA, Philippines — Fish prices may climb even higher during Holy Week, driven not only by increased demand but also by rising production costs linked to the ongoing oil price surge, according to the fishers’ group Pambansang Lakas ng Kilusang Mamamalakaya ng Pilipinas (Pamalakaya) on Tuesday. “The government’s failure to address the oil crisis will

- [DA counters concerns over potential spike in food prices](#) (2026-03-31 17:22)

MANILA, Philippines — The Department of Agriculture (DA) on Tuesday countered concerns over spikes in prices of food, stating that current projections tied to runaway prices of fuel do not reflect government interventions. In a statement, Agriculture Sec. Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. described such scenarios as being based “on extreme assumptions and excluded mitigating measures.” READ:

- [Legarda lauds Filipina women’s resilience amid climate crisis](#) (2026-03-31 17:21)

At the conclusion of National Women’s Month, Sen. Loren Legarda praised the crucial role of Filipina women in holding communities together, especially during trying times caused by extreme weather. Legarda pointed out that Filipina women have long strived to make their families better, but have been faced with difficult challenges exacerbated by natural disasters

- [DILG warns public: Avoid swimming while drunk this summer](#) (2026-03-31 17:11)

MANILA, Philippines — Interior and Local Government Secretary Jonvic Remulla on Tuesday warned the public against swimming while under the influence of alcohol while on vacation during the Holy Week and summer season. “We won’t arrest them. Having fun over the Holy Week isn’t a crime. Just don’t be intoxicated while swimming. Either one is

- [PH joins global initiative for school feeding programs](#) (2026-03-31 16:51)

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippines has officially joined a global support initiative for school feeding programs, making the country among beneficiary nations of its support mechanisms intended to end worldwide child hunger. The Department of Education (DepEd) on Tuesday announced the Philippines’ membership to the Governance Committee of the School Meals Accelerator (SMA), an initiative

- [BFP relieves all Metro Manila fire inspectors in anti-graft crackdown](#) (2026-03-31 16:39)

MANILA, Philippines — The Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP) relieved all fire safety inspectors (FSIs) in the National Capital Region (NCR) in a bid to crack down on corruption in the agency.

“This move aims to set a new standard for transparency before expanding the program to other regions,” the BFP said in a statement

- [Pangilinan: Supplemental budget for aid, support to agri sector needed](#) (2026-03-31 16:21)

MANILA, Philippines — The government needs to have a supplemental budget that would allow the provision of aid for sectors affected by the fuel price crisis — including the agricultural sector which may suffer from higher fertilizer costs — Sen. Francis Pangilinan said on Tuesday. In an interview, Pangilinan said he is supporting a Bayanihan-type supplemental

- [Castro to Paolo Duterte: Don't blame Marcos for past corruption](#) (2026-03-31 16:17)

MANILA, Philippines — Palace Press Officer Claire Castro on Tuesday told Davao City Rep. Paolo Duterte not to pin on President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. the alleged corruption committed by his predecessor. This came in response to the congressman's social media post, where he said he finds it “ironic” that Marcos is worried about anyone undoing his

- [PhilHealth to collect premiums despite calls to pause amid crisis](#) (2026-03-31 15:59)

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PhilHealth) on Tuesday acknowledged calls to temporarily suspend premium payments but affirmed that contributions will continue to fund member benefits. In an advisory on Tuesday, PhilHealth said it recognizes the pleas of many Filipinos to temporarily suspend premium payments as relief amid rising fuel costs, which affect

- [House to craft Bayanihan 3, but won't use loans to fund aid – Quimbo](#) (2026-03-31 15:51)

MANILA, Philippines — The House of Representatives' super committee tasked to come up with a response to the crisis caused by the Middle East conflict will likely form a new version of the Bayanihan bills used during the COVID-19 pandemic, but without resorting to loans, Marikina Rep. Miro Quimbo said on Tuesday. Quimbo, in an online

- [BFAR extends fuel aid to 900 Biliran fishers](#) (2026-03-31 15:45)

TACLOBAN CITY — More than 900 municipal fishers in Biliran province received fuel assistance from the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) to support small-scale fishers who are heavily affected by the wild fluctuations in petroleum prices. The fuel aid distribution was held under the Fuel Discount Program for Farmers and Fisherfolk (FDPFF) caravan

- [Close to 2,000 tricycle drivers in Iloilo City to get aid](#) (2026-03-31 15:36)

ILOILO CITY—Apart from jeepney drivers, the Iloilo City government on Tuesday said that it will begin distributing fuel subsidies to tricycle drivers and operators on April 8, after the Holy Week. The subsidy distribution is funded by the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), with the local government facilitating documents and organizing the distribution process.

- [Rising fuel prices push fishers, farmers deeper into debt](#) (2026-03-31 15:31)

MANILA, Philippines—Small fishers are docking their boats. Farmers are cutting back on irrigation. Across the country, rising fuel prices are squeezing the sectors that keep food on Filipino tables. In separate statements, fisherfolk group Pamalakaya and farmers’ group Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP) warned that persistent oil price hikes are pushing producers deeper into debt,

- [PNP cracks down on illegal bus fare hikes amid Holy Week exodus](#) (2026-03-31 15:29)

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippine National Police (PNP) vowed to strictly monitor fare hikes after eight bus companies were found to have allegedly raised prices illegally during the Holy Week exodus. “This must not be tolerated, otherwise, this will encourage others to do the same,” PNP Chief Gen. Jose Melencio Nartatez Jr. said in a

- [Holy Week 2026: PNP on full alert, increases deployment of cops](#) (2026-03-31 15:27)

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippine National Police (PNP) is now on full alert and is increasing its deployment of law enforcers for security measures during Holy Week. The alert level status came into effect at 12:01 a.m. on Tuesday, March 31, and will stay in effect until 11:59 p.m. on Sunday, April 5, PNP Chief

- [3 gas stations in Tagbilaran City flagged for overpricing fuel](#) (2026-03-31 15:23)

TAGBILARAN CITY — Several gasoline stations in Tagbilaran City, Bohol, will be issued show-cause orders after authorities found possible unjustified increases in fuel prices during a surprise inspection. The move came after the Tagbilaran City government conducted surprise inspections of gasoline stations on Tuesday following another round of fuel price hikes. READ: 8 Bohol gas

- [DOTr: LRT, MRT to pause ops; Edsa bus carousel open for Holy Week](#) (2026-03-31 15:17)

MANILA, Philippines — Light Rail Transit Lines 1 and 2 (LRT-1 and 2) and Metro Rail Transit Line 3 (MRT-3) will be closed from Holy Thursday to Easter Sunday, the Department of Transportation (DOTr) said. In a press briefing in Camp Crame on Tuesday, DOTr Secretary Giovanni Lopez said the train lines’ suspension of operations

- [LOOK: Police mascots roam Naia, share fliers for safe vacation](#) (2026-03-31 15:16)

MANILA, Philippines — Police officers, along with police mascots, roamed the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (Naia) on Tuesday, March 31, to share fliers for a safe summer vacation. The police mascots and officers from the Police Community Affairs Group greeted passengers and handed them fliers entitled “Ligtas SumVac (summer vacation) 2026,” containing safety reminders for

- [Herbosa hit with new raps over alleged P1.5B expired meds, vaccines](#) (2026-03-31 14:51)

MANILA, Philippines – Health Secretary Teodoro Herbosa is facing fresh criminal and administrative complaints before the Office of the Ombudsman, this time over the alleged P1.5 billion worth of expired medicines and vaccines classified as “dead stock.” The 33-page complaint, filed Tuesday by a group identifying themselves as “concerned Department of Health personnel,” accused Herbosa

- [BOC-Naia seizes P38.6-M worth of illegal drugs in March 2026](#) (2026-03-31 14:47)

MANILA, Philippines — Illegal drugs from several inbound shipments worth P38.6 million have been seized by the Bureau of Customs – Ninoy Aquino International Airport (BOC-Naia) through a series of operations in March 2026, the agency said on Tuesday. According to the agency, the suspicious shipments were seized inside the warehouse facilities in Pasay City.

- [BARMM has enough fuel for April, reg’ l energy agency says](#) (2026-03-31 14:24)

COTABATO CITY—The top energy official of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) has assured that the region has enough fuel to last for the entire month of April. READ: BARMM energy office assures public of ample fuel supplies The assurance came as several gas stations in some parts of the country temporarily closed

- [Palace: Marcos wants anti-corruption probe to continue beyond his term](#) (2026-03-31 14:20)

MANILA, Philippines — President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. wants the investigation into the corruption issues plaguing the government to continue even after his term ends, according to Palace press officer Claire Castro. These remarks followed a recent Pulse Asia Ulat ng Bayan survey, which found that 28.6 percent of respondents cited Marcos’ efforts to fight government corruption

- [DTI urges firms to keep basic goods prices stable past April 16](#) (2026-03-31 14:02)

MANILA, Philippines — The Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) will hold weekly meetings with manufacturers and retailers to extend their commitment not to raise the prices of basic commodities even after mid-April, according to Malacañang. In a briefing on Tuesday, Palace Press Officer Claire Castro said Trade Secretary Cristina Roque informed President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.

- [Hatiran: Cardona, Rizal’ s quiet procession that opens Holy Week](#) (2026-03-31 14:00)

MANILA, Philippines — Holy Week began on Palm Sunday, March 29, with a silent yet deeply moving display of devotion in Cardona, Rizal, as residents carried religious images depicting the Passion and death of Jesus Christ through the streets. Delicately kept in homes throughout the year, the images are brought out and paraded one by

- [Parents miss son’ s graduation amid Holy Week travel rush](#) (2026-03-31 13:51)

MANILA, Philippines — Commuters flocked to bus terminals in Cubao on Holy Tuesday, not only to beat the Holy Week travel rush, but also to attend graduation and moving-up ceremonies. Among them was Jocelyn Calongcagong, who traveled from Alaminos, Pangasinan to Cubao to meet her husband at the Victory Liner terminal in Quezon City. READ:

- [Fuel hikes push car owners to buses, boost PITX ridership](#) (2026-03-31 13:40)

MANILA, Philippines — Rising fuel prices have prompted some car owners to shift to public transportation, contributing to an increase in passenger volume at the Parañaque Integrated Terminal Exchange (PITX), an official said Tuesday. According to PITX spokesperson Jason Salvador, the uptick in passengers this Holy Week may be linked to motorists opting not to

- [DOTr awaits release order for P1-billion service contracting program](#) (2026-03-31 13:33)

MANILA, Philippines — The Department of Transportation (DOTr) is waiting for the Department of Budget and Management's (DBM) special allotment release order (SARO) for P1 billion to fund the government's service contracting program. In a press briefing in Camp Crame on Tuesday, DOTr Secretary Giovanni Lopez noted that their department had requested for the SARO

- [Palace to critics: Wake up, flood control probe still ongoing](#) (2026-03-31 13:16)

MANILA, Philippines — “Hoy, gising (Hey, wake up)!” This was the response of Palace press officer Claire Castro to critics claiming the administration's probe on anomalous flood control projects did not come to fruition. According to Castro, the government has not forgotten the investigation and is still pursuing individuals involved in the flood control scandal,

- [Palace on Imee Marcos' failure to guide her brother: 'Who misbehaved?'](#) (2026-03-31 13:11)

MANILA, Philippines — The Holy Week may be a time for reflection and forgiveness, but not for the long-estranged siblings – President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. and Senator Imee Marcos. Malacañang hit back at the president's sister for allegedly dragging their father's name into their falling out over political and personal issues. In a briefing on Tuesday,

- [Leviste unfazed by 'DDS' tag: Only DDS want final report from ICI](#) (2026-03-31 12:57)

MANILA, Philippines — Batangas Rep. Leandro Legarda Leviste is unbothered by any tags or accusations that he is among the supporters of former President Rodrigo Duterte, as Duterte-aligned lawmakers were the only ones asking for the Independent Commission for Infrastructure (ICI) reports. Leviste on Tuesday was asked if he was not afraid of being associated to

- [PCG on full alert, deploys 17,000 personnel for Holy Week 2026 — DOTr](#) (2026-03-31 12:53)

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippine Coast Guard is now on full alert and has deployed around 17,000 personnel for security at transport hubs and along sea travel routes for the Holy Week

exodus, the Department of Transportation (DOTr) said on Tuesday. “Our Coast Guard is ready to help and assist our countrymen,” DOTr Secretary Giovanni

- [DPWH pauses road work projects to give way to Holy Week exodus](#) (2026-03-31 12:31)

MANILA, Philippines — The Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) ordered all its offices to pause construction projects across the country to give way for travel during the Holy Week exodus. “Our instruction to all district engineers and regional offices is that there should be no ongoing projects. No one should build. No one

- [INQToday: Volume of passengers builds up in Cubao bus stations, Naia on Holy Tuesday](#) (2026-03-31 12:23)

Volume of passengers builds up in Cubao bus stations on Holy Tuesday As early as 8 a.m. on Holy Tuesday (March 31), passengers have started flocking to bus terminals in Cubao, Quezon City opting to travel early to their provinces ahead of the expected Holy Week travel rush. NAIA passenger volume on Holy Tuesday slightly

- [DOTr to expand road clearing ops for Holy Week 2026](#) (2026-03-31 12:21)

MANILA, Philippines — The Department of Transportation (DOTr) will be expanding its road clearing operations starting on Wednesday ahead of the influx of travelers for the Holy Week. While authorities usually cleared the country’s expressways and the Maharlika Highway, in a press briefing in Camp Crame on Tuesday, DOTr Secretary Giovanni Lopez said the initiative

- [Palace: Gov’t employees to be on half-day, work-from-home setup Holy Wed](#) (2026-03-31 11:53)

MANILA, Philippines — Government employees will be on a half-day work-from-home arrangement on Holy Wednesday, Palace Press Officer Claire Castro announced on Tuesday.

“On April 1, all government employees will work from home from 8:00 AM to 12:00 noon. From 12:01 PM to 5:00 PM, there will be no work,” Castro told reporters. Work arrangements for

- [2 drug suspects held, P867,000 worth of shabu seized in Lucena City](#) (2026-03-31 11:46)

LUCENA CITY, Quezon — Police seized suspected shabu worth an estimated P867,000 from two alleged drug pushers in separate buy-bust operations here on Monday. Col. Romulo Albacea, Quezon police chief, said in a report Tuesday that operatives of the Provincial Drug Enforcement Unit (PDEU) arrested a suspect identified only as “Opaw,” 28, at around 7:50

- [Faith, creativity meet in Holy Week art retreat in Calapan](#) (2026-03-31 11:45)

CALAPAN CITY, Oriental Mindoro — Faith took on color, texture, and form as artists and participants gathered for a reflective “Holy Week Art Retreat” on Holy Monday (March 30), transforming a quiet space into what organizers described as a “sacred encounter” through art. The retreat, dubbed “Articulating Prayer Experience through Art,” was held at the

- [Faith thrives in Philippines as social tensions persist, data show](#) (2026-03-31 11:43)

MANILA, Philippines — As Lent calls Filipinos to prayer, sacrifice and reflection, new global data suggest the country's deepest divides may lie not in belief itself, but in how it is lived alongside others. Drawing on data from the Pew Research Center, Dr. Rogelio Alicor Panao, an associate professor at the University of the Philippines

- [3 dead in Nueva Ecija irrigation canal drowning](#) (2026-03-31 11:38)

GUIMBA, Nueva Ecija — Three people died after reportedly attempting to swim in an irrigation canal in Barangay Naglabrahan on Monday afternoon. The victims were identified as cousins Ruben Benavidez, 31, and Elmer Benavidez, 47, both residents of the village, and Jomar Gobrin, 29, a native of Matnog, Sorsogon City. The incident was reported around

- [Group seeks conversion of faithful to 'sustainable practices'](#) (2026-03-31 11:30)

TACLOBAN CITY — As the country observes Holy Week, the nongovernmental organization BAN Toxics is urging the Filipino faithful to adopt sustainable and environmentally responsible practices, citing rising energy costs, water scarcity, and the intensifying climate crisis. In a statement released on March 29, the group highlighted the impact of extreme heat, noting that last

- [BARMM chief creates oil crisis task force](#) (2026-03-31 11:22)

COTABATO CITY – Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) interim Chief Minister Abdulraof Macacua has formed the inter-agency Bangsamoro Oil Crisis Impact Task Force (BOCITF) to monitor the impact of the oil crisis in communities throughout the region. Macacua said the effort seeks to hedge against profiteering and opportunistic traders as well as address the socioeconomic impact of

- [1 dead, 5 injured in four-vehicle crash in Tacloban City](#) (2026-03-31 11:12)

TACLOBAN CITY — A 61-year-old man died while five others were injured in a four-vehicle collision along Maharlika Highway in Barangay 93, Bagacay, Tacloban City, on Monday. Police identified the fatality only as “Terry”, of Jaro, Leyte, who was driving a Skygo motorcycle. He was declared dead on arrival at the Eastern Visayas Medical Center

- [Process to sainthood begins for Bishop Guerrero](#) (2026-03-31 11:05)

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO, Pampanga — The Archdiocese of Lingayen-Dagupan has launched its diocesan inquiry for the beatification cause of Bishop Cesar Maria Guerrero, who pioneered dioceses, established seminaries, and promoted Marian devotions. The ceremony at the Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist in Dagupan City on March 27 followed approval from the Dicastery for

- [Makabayan lawmakers urge decisive action on rising fuel prices](#) (2026-03-31 10:59)

MANILA, Philippines — Lawmakers from the Makabayan bloc on Tuesday urged the House of Representatives to ensure that upcoming joint hearings on the oil crisis result in substantive measures rather than stopgap or “publicity-driven” actions. In a statement, ACT Teachers party-list Rep. Antonio Tinio, Gabriela party-list Rep. Sarah Elago, and Kabataan party-list Rep. Renee

- [‘Stranded’ helper gets job hours after online plea](#) (2026-03-31 10:51)

MANILA, Philippines — Job offers came flooding in for a household helper who had been stranded in a Quezon City bus terminal after her ordeal went online. Several social media users, whether in Facebook comments and private messages to this reporter, have expressed their willingness to hire Carmen Pepito Dela Cruz, 53, after her failed job

- [Mt. Banahaw fire affects grassland areas in Quezon – DENR](#) (2026-03-31 10:50)

LUCENA CITY — A brush fire that broke out atop Mt. Banahaw in Quezon province on Sunday, March 29, burned approximately 1,000 square meters of grassland, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) reported. In a report submitted Monday to DENR Calabarzon director Nilo Tamoria, park superintendent Josephine Barrion said the fire affected areas

- [Cardinal David’ s new book shows Jesus’ ‘humanity and compassion’](#) (2026-03-31 10:32)

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO, Pampanga — “Get to know Jesus as a human being.” This was how Cardinal Pablo Virgilio S. David opened the Pampanga-leg launch of his book Yeshua (Son of Man) here recently. David, a native of Betis, Guagua, cautioned the audience about the challenge of this approach, noting that Yeshua—Jesus in Hebrew—has

- [Marcos to observe Holy Week in Ilocos Norte](#) (2026-03-31 10:32)

MANILA, Philippines — President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. will spend Holy Week in Ilocos Norte but will continue to monitor and issue directives to government agencies responding to the Middle East conflict. In a brief media interview in Nueva Ecija on Tuesday, Marcos said he plans to observe Lent in his home province before returning to the city.

- [Marcos on opening of CLLEX in Nueva Ecija: It will be toll-free until Dec](#) (2026-03-31 10:30)

MANILA, Philippines — President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. on Tuesday announced that the newly opened San Juan Interchange of the Central Luzon Link Expressway (CLLEX) in Aliaga, Nueva Ecija will be toll-free until December 2026. This expressway is expected to cut travel time between Tarlac and Cabanatuan to just 20 minutes. In a brief media statement during

- [Drivers urged to stay disciplined, avoid road rage this Holy Week](#) (2026-03-31 10:14)

MANILA, Philippines — The Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB) on Tuesday encouraged all drivers and motorists to exercise discipline and avoid road rage as they

hit the roads this Holy Week. LTFRB chairperson Atty. Vigor Mendoza III emphasized the importance of drivers keeping their cool, noting past road rage incidents

- [Iloilo City to distribute additional fuel aid to PUJ drivers](#) (2026-03-31 10:13)

ILOILO CITY— The Iloilo City government will continue distributing fuel subsidy coupons to public utility jeepney (PUJ) drivers on April 9 as part of efforts to ease the impact of rising fuel prices on the transport sector. The city announced on Tuesday, March 31, that a total of 1,600 PUJ drivers and operators qualified for

- [LOOK: Thousands of travelers show up at Naia; most got tickets in advance](#) (2026-03-31 10:06)

MANILA, Philippines — Thousands of passengers have showed up at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (Naia) in Pasay City for this year's Holy Week, according to the Manila International Airport Authority (MIAA). In an interview with the Inquirer, MIAA General Manager Eric Jose Ines said that the arrival and departure of travelers have been going

- [Kidapawan villagers line up for P20 per kilo rice](#) (2026-03-31 09:58)

KIDAPAWAN CITY — Villagers flocked to the National Food Authority (NFA)-Cotabato warehouse early Monday morning to avail themselves of rice priced at P20 per kilogram. To accommodate demand, NFA-Cotabato increased the purchase limit per individual from 10 kilos to 30 kilos, giving better access to residents coming from far-flung barangays. Despite the adjustments, some villagers

- [Over 600 cops deployed across Zambales for Holy Week](#) (2026-03-31 09:57)

SAN ANTONIO, Zambales — More than 600 police officers have been deployed across the province as part of heightened security measures for the observance of Holy Week, the provincial police office said Monday. According to the Zambales Police Provincial Office (PPO), personnel were deployed to various municipalities starting Palm Sunday, with security boosted in churches

- [No price spike yet in Bicol food markets amid fuel crisis — DA](#) (2026-03-31 09:31)

LEGAZPI CITY — Prices of basic food items in the Bicol region have remained stable despite the ongoing petroleum products crisis. Lovella Guarin, Department of Agriculture regional information officer, told the Inquirer in a private message that retail prices across major public markets have so far shown no unusual spikes. “We have not yet observed

- [Donsol cancels Butanding Festival amid oil price surge](#) (2026-03-31 09:22)

LEGAZPI CITY — The local government of Donsol in Sorsogon province has canceled this year's Butanding Festival, originally set from April 24 to 30, citing the impact of rising oil prices. Desiree Abitria, municipal tourism officer, said the decision was reached during an emergency meeting with the town's tourism committee. “We unanimously agreed that everyone

- [Biodiesel project expanded across Bacolod villages](#) (2026-03-31 09:09)

BACOLOD CITY—Deputy House Speaker and Bacolod Rep. Alfredo Abelardo Benitez announced on Monday the expansion of a biodiesel project to more barangays in Bacolod City, aiming to cushion the impact of rising fuel costs while creating livelihood opportunities. Biodiesel, a renewable alternative to fossil fuels, is produced from vegetable oils, animal fats, used cooking oil,

- [3 former communist rebels surrender in Masbate](#) (2026-03-31 08:57)

LEGAZPI CITY — Three alleged members of a communist group in Masbate voluntarily surrendered to the authorities in the province on Sunday in the town of Baleno, police reported on Monday. Police Brigadier General Erosito Miranda, chief of the Bicol police, said the surrender resulted from coordinated efforts among units under the Masbate Police Provincial

- [LOOK: Volume of passengers builds up in Cubao bus stations on Holy Tuesday](#) (2026-03-31 08:54)

MANILA, Philippines — As early as 8 a.m. on Holy Tuesday (March 31), passengers have started flocking to bus terminals in Cubao, Quezon City opting to travel early to their provinces ahead of the expected Holy Week travel rush. Here are some images.

- [OIL PRICE WATCH as of March 31, 2026](#) (2026-03-31 08:53)

MANILA, Philippines – Local fuel prices are set to end the month with no reprieve in sight, as motorists face another round of increases this Tuesday, March 31, driven by rising global oil costs. Oil firms on Monday announced that they would implement price increases for diesel, reaching P12.50 to P12.90 a liter while gasoline

- [Manhunt on for gunmen in killing of police corporal in Lanao del Sur](#) (2026-03-31 08:23)

MANILA, Philippines — The police are now on the hunt for the gunmen behind the killing of a police corporal and his companion in Lanao del Sur. “Hot pursuit operations are ongoing and we are confident that those responsible will be caught. We will not stop until we hold them accountable,” Philippine National Police (PNP)

- [Irrigation project enables 3rd cropping in Iloilo town](#) (2026-03-31 07:24)

ILOILO CITY — For the first time, 517 farmer-members of the Agbato Calinog Irrigators Association Inc. in the municipality of Calinog in Iloilo embarked on a third cropping, or double dry season cropping. This comes following the successful delivery of irrigation waters from the Jalaur River Multipurpose Project Stage II (JRMP II). Steve Cordero, officer-in-charge for

- [Heat index in Cotabato City may hit 41°C; 70 areas on alert](#) (2026-03-31 07:10)

MANILA, Philippines — The heat index in Cotabato City is expected to hit 41 degrees Celsius on Tuesday, March 31, placing it under the “extreme caution” category, according to the

Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration. PAGASA classifies heat index levels between 33°C and 41°C as “extreme caution,” where heat cramps and heat exhaustion

- [Cloudy weather expected over PH on Tuesday, March 31](#) (2026-03-31 07:09)

MANILA, Philippines — Partly cloudy to cloudy weather is expected over the whole country on Tuesday, March 31, the state weather bureau said. The Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) reported that Metro Manila and the rest of Luzon will experience partly cloudy to cloudy skies. There is a chance of thunderstorms in

- [Carpooling eyed in Metro under strict guidelines](#) (2026-03-31 05:50)

MANILA, Philippines — The Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB) will soon release special permits to individuals or companies seeking to enroll in the government’s carpooling program, as a way to provide alternative transportation to commuters. At a briefing on Monday, officials of the LTFRB, Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) and Land Transportation Office

- [Lawyers’ group: 80% of travelers won’t benefit from airport fee cuts](#) (2026-03-31 05:45)

MANILA, Philippines — A group of lawyers has criticized the rollout of airport fee discounts scheduled in April, saying around 80 percent of travelers cannot benefit from the measure since it does not cover Ninoy Aquino International Airport (Naia), which is now under a private operator. The Department of Transportation recently announced the reduction of

- [Marcos: New Cavite segment toll-free this April](#) (2026-03-31 05:15)

MANILA, Philippines — The newly opened Manila-Cavite Expressway (Cavite) C-5 Link Segment 3B will be free for use by motorists until the end of April to help those traveling during the Holy Week, according to President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. The President on Monday led the opening of the six-lane, 2-kilometer connector road, which is expected

- [DOJ, Pagcor sign MOA barring all department personnel from casinos](#) (2026-03-31 05:05)

MANILA, Philippines — The Department of Justice (DOJ) and the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp. (Pagcor) on Monday entered into a memorandum of agreement (MOA) to include all DOJ officials and employees to the list of persons banned from casinos. Pagcor chair and CEO Alejandro Tengco said the MOA was the first to be signed

- [8 bus firms face probe for illegal fare increases](#) (2026-03-31 05:00)

MANILA, Philippines — The Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB) on Monday reminded bus companies not to take advantage of passengers headed home to their provinces during the Holy Week break, as it received a report about bus firms that had raised their fares illegally. Transportation Secretary Giovanni Lopez also issued a similar reminder,

- [Woman stranded at QC bus terminal after failed job hunt](#) (2026-03-31 04:50)

MANILA, Philippines — A 53-year-old woman has been waiting patiently since the weekend at the Victory Bus Liner terminal in Quezon City, not for a bus ride but for a job offer. “I am just here to look for a job as a house helper,” Carmen Pepito dela Cruz told the Inquirer on Monday. She

- [Social media ban pushed anew for kids 16 and below](#) (2026-03-31 04:45)

MANILA, Philippines — Sen. Sherwin Gatchalian on Monday renewed his call for a social media ban on individuals aged 16 and below after the Indonesian government blocked children below 16 years old from high-risk platforms. In a press statement, Gatchalian cited the results of the 2022 Programme for International Student Assessment, which found that for

- [Local terrorist group eyed in Maguindanao ambush](#) (2026-03-31 04:40)

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippine National Police (PNP) is investigating the possible involvement of a local terrorist group in the deadly ambush in Maguindanao del Sur that killed five police officers and wounded three others last Saturday night. PNP spokesperson Brig. Gen. Randulf Tuaño said in a press briefing at Camp Crame on Monday that

- [In Zamboanga City, island folk finally get safe water](#) (2026-03-31 04:35)

ZAMBOANGA CITY, Philippines — For years, residents of Barangay Tumulutab Island began their mornings lining up with empty containers, waiting for water deliveries by boat from the city’s mainland. At P50 to P70 per five-gallon container, clean water was a daily financial burden for families in the island barangay. That routine has begun to change.

- [Repatriated OFW lands job at Bulacan fair](#) (2026-03-31 04:30)

CITY OF MALOLOS, BULACAN, Philippines — One of Bulacan’s eight repatriated overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) from the Middle East has already secured employment through a job fair organized by the Bulacan provincial government, just three days after returning home. Provincial Public Employment Service Office (Peso) head Engr. Egbert Robles said the OFW, from San Jose

- [Mayon Volcano continues to spew lava fountains – Phivolcs](#) (2026-03-31 00:37)

MANILA, Philippines — Mayon Volcano continued to produce lava fountains on Tuesday evening, this time reaching 250-meters above its crater, the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs) said. According to Phivolcs in an advisory, lava fountaining in Mayon was recorded at exactly 07:42 p.m. “These events produced 250 m-tall incandescent fountains and ash plumes

- [Fuel shortage cuts local passenger ferries by 10% – DOTr](#) (2026-03-31 00:31)

MANILA, Philippines — Transportation Secretary Giovanni Lopez confirmed that fewer inter-province ships have been sailing across the country due to fuel supply problems caused by

the ongoing war in the Middle East. Lopez told reporters in Parañaque City on Monday that he ordered the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) to deploy ships to ferry stranded passengers,

- [NGO warns vs coal expansion amid energy crisis](#) (2026-03-30 23:58)

MANILA, Philippines — A non-governmental organization on Monday called on the government to prioritize renewable energy over boosting coal-fired power generation, as such measures could only undermine the country's long-term energy transition. Climate Conflict Action Asia (CCAA) issued the call after President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. declared a state of national energy emergency and ordered the

- [PCSO: No jackpot winners in March 30 lotto draws](#) (2026-03-30 22:59)

MANILA, Philippines — No bettor won the jackpot prizes for Grand Lotto 6/55 and Megalotto 6/45 in Monday's (March 30) Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office (PCSO) draws. Grand Lotto 6/55 produced the combination 27-34-31-54-23-03 for a jackpot of P45 million, with no winner. Megalotto 6/45 drew 03-27-24-07-43-13 for a P15 million jackpot, also with no winner,

- [DOTr urges Holy Week travelers to report illegal fare hikes](#) (2026-03-30 22:30)

MANILA, Philippines — Department of Transportation (DOTr) Secretary Giovanni Lopez on Monday urged Filipinos, especially those traveling back to their provinces for the Holy Week, to report to authorities bus companies that raised their fares despite the directive of President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. indefinitely suspending such hikes. Lopez said personnel of the Land Transportation Franchising

- [De Lima files resolutions seeking to probe surge in diesel prices](#) (2026-03-30 22:04)

MANILA, Philippines — Mamamayang Liberal party-list Rep. Leila de Lima has filed measures seeking to probe the surge in diesel prices in the country, as well as assess and address its impact on public transportation. In filing House Resolution (HR) No. 914, De Lima stressed the need to determine why the country has emerged as

- [Driver in 'gas and run' case now in police custody](#) (2026-03-30 20:58)

MANILA, Philippines — The driver who fled from a gas station without paying for fuel worth P5,000 is now in police custody. Quezon City Police District (QCPD) spokesperson Maj. Jennifer Gannaban on Monday night confirmed to the Inquirer in a text message that the suspect was taken into the custody of the La Loma Police

- [SSS, GSIS urged to immediately release Easter bonus for pensioners](#) (2026-03-30 20:48)

MANILA, Philippines — SSS-GSIS Pensonado party-list Rep. Rolando Macasaet on Monday called for the immediate release of an "Easter Emergency Bonus" to help pensioners of the Social Security System (SSS) and Government Service Insurance System (GSIS) cope with rising prices. Macasaet noted that pensioners remain among the most vulnerable sectors during the crisis. READ: SSS

- [Manila Water advises customers to schedule septic tank desludging this summer](#) (2026-03-30 20:45)

As the summer months begin, Manila Water calls on its customers to take proactive steps to maintain their septic tanks to safeguard household comfort, public safety, and community health. With higher temperatures and increased water consumption typical of the summer months, septic systems experience greater stress, making desludging a critical precaution to prevent overflows and

- [Lawyers to SC: Resolve petition vs hike in airport fees](#) (2026-03-30 20:38)

MANILA, Philippines – An urgent motion was filed by a group of lawyers on Thursday asking the Supreme Court (SC) to resolve their pending application for a restraining order against increased airport fees which was filed last year. The lawyers, led by Atty. Joel R. Butuyan, Antonio G.M. La Viña, Soledad Deriquito Mawis, Roger R.

- [Angara challenges Class of 2026 to maintain resilience beyond graduation](#) (2026-03-30 20:32)

MAKATI CITY, Philippines — Education Secretary Sonny Angara on Monday challenged graduates nationwide to maintain their spirit of resilience as they transition out of the basic education system, as nearly 48,000 public schools hold their end-of-school-year (EOSY) ceremonies. In his message for the graduation and moving-up ceremonies, Secretary Angara reminded the graduating batch that their

- [AI drone project to detect banana disease in Davao Region farms](#) (2026-03-30 20:19)

DAVAO CITY – The Department of Agriculture in Davao Region (DA-11) signed a memorandum of understanding Monday with Japanese firm E-Supportlink Co., Ltd. to launch an artificial intelligence (AI)-powered drone pilot project for banana plant counting and early disease detection. The banana industry is a major contributor to the Philippine agricultural economy, particularly in Mindanao. However,

- [Meralco: No scheduled 3-month long brownouts](#) (2026-03-30 19:40)

MANILA, Philippines — The Manila Electric Company (Meralco) on Monday denied claims circulating online about a supposed three-month power outage, explicitly tagging the posts as fake. READ: Meralco to review fuel costs as Middle East war pushing up power rates Meralco issued the clarification through a “fake news alert” posted on its official social media

- [PhilHealth enforces ‘No SPA, No Payment’ for self-paying members](#) (2026-03-30 19:22)

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PhilHealth) will implement the “No SPA, No Payment” policy for self-paying members beginning April 1 as part of digitalization and service efficiency efforts. In a news release on Monday, the state insurer said the digital system aims to ensure that contributions are accurately recorded and credited

without

- [Sara Duterte impeachment: SALNs used to convict Corona — Zamora](#) (2026-03-30 19:21)

MANILA, Philippines — House justice committee vice chair Ysabel Maria Zamora on Monday said the scrutiny of Vice President Sara Duterte’s statements of liabilities and net worth (SALNs) has a precedent: the impeachment case of Chief Justice Renato Corona, who was convicted. “The non-disclosure of certain assets or even just one asset in the SALNs

- [No practical effect: SC dismisses Harry Roque’s petition](#) (2026-03-30 19:17)

MANILA, Philippines – The Supreme Court (SC) has dismissed the petition of former presidential spokesperson Harry Roque to stop the House of Representatives’ Quad Committee (Quadcomm) from arresting him and requiring him to attend hearings and submit documents related to the Philippine Offshore Gaming Operators (POGOs). In a decision made public Monday, the SC, through

- [LTO summons driver, vehicle owner involved in Rizal road rage](#) (2026-03-30 18:27)

MANILA, Philippines — The Land Transportation Office (LTO) on Monday said it summoned a motor vehicle driver who allegedly brandished a firearm during a road rage incident in Taytay, Rizal. The LTO said it also summoned the registered owner of the vehicle, a Nissan Navara, along with the driver, and ordered both to appear before

- [PCSO to deploy landing craft vessel to boost patient mobility in Batanes](#) (2026-03-30 17:25)

BASCO, Batanes — In line with President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.’s directive to make healthcare accessible for everyone, the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office (PCSO) has announced its plan to provide a landing craft vessel (LCV) for Batanes to improve patient transport across the province’s island municipalities, with deployment scheduled later this year. PCSO General Manager Melquiades

- [Legarda stresses peacebuilding as lifelong mission at PAMANA MOA signing](#) (2026-03-30 17:14)

Sen. Loren Legarda stressed her lifelong mission of peacebuilding, recalling her decades of work mediating in conflict areas, negotiating the release of captives, and championing programs that transform peace agreements into development dividends for communities long deprived of basic services. She delivered this message as Guest of Honor and Speaker at the signing of the

- [PNP vows stricter monitoring of prices of basic goods during Holy Week](#) (2026-03-30 17:08)

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippine National Police (PNP) will be more strict on monitoring the prices of basic goods during this year’s observance of Holy Week in anticipation of an influx of travelers and tourists. In a statement on Monday, PNP Chief Gen. Jose Melencio Nartatez Jr. said the law enforcement agency was coordinating with

- [BFP to deploy 40,000 firefighters for Holy Week 2026 – DILG](#) (2026-03-30 17:00)

MANILA, Philippines — The Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP) will be deploying around 40,000 firefighters as part of safety measures during this year’s observance of the Holy Week, the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) said on Monday. In a statement, the DILG, which supervises the BFP, noted that the fire bureau will

- [Legarda asserts women’s central role in water governance](#) (2026-03-30 16:59)

Sen. Loren Legarda urged stronger enforcement of environmental and water laws, stressing that women’s leadership and grassroots innovation are central to securing water, building climate resilience, and promoting inclusive development. Speaking at the Water and Women Forum PH 2026 held on March 23 in Quezon City, in celebration of World Water Day and National Women’s

- [QC police tracks down owner of vehicle in ‘gas and run’ case](#) (2026-03-30 16:53)

MANILA, Philippines — The Quezon City Police District (QCPD) has identified the owner and confirmed the plate number of the vehicle whose driver recently fled a gas station without settling his fuel bill of over P5,000. “Authorities immediately coordinated with the Land Transportation Office and the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority, resulting in a clearer image

- [Bam Aquino pushes bill to allow gov’t to cap gasoline, diesel prices](#) (2026-03-30 16:49)

MANILA, Philippines — As oil prices continue to rise, Senator Bam Aquino has filed a bill seeking to classify gasoline, diesel, and other petroleum products as basic necessities, placing them under government price controls. In filing Senate Bill No. 2011, Aquino explained that the proposed measure intends to address a gap in Republic Act No.

- [PITX: 39 extra trips to Bicol region added due to high demand](#) (2026-03-30 16:40)

Passengers board a bus bound for Catanduanes at the PITX on Monday afternoon. (INQUIRER.net / Keith Clores) MANILA, Philippines — Thirty-nine additional trips to the Bicol region have been added and scheduled at the Parañaque Integrated Terminal Exchange (PITX) on Monday afternoon. In a message to reporters, PITX Senior Corporate Affairs Officer Kolyn Calbasa said

- [Thousands of TNVS drivers excluded by operators from aid list – DSWD](#) (2026-03-30 16:38)

MANILA, Philippines — Some transport network vehicle service (TNVS) drivers were not able to receive P5,000 cash aid from the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) because their companies excluded them from the list of beneficiaries, according to Secretary Rex Gatchalian. In a press conference on Monday, Gatchalian said they are currently in the

- [PNP tightens Maguindanao del Sur security after ambush kills 5 cops](#) (2026-03-30 15:42)

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippine National Police (PNP) has tightened security measures in Maguindanao del Sur following an ambush in Shariff Aguak town, which killed five cops and injured three more during patrol operations over the weekend. “The internal protocols for field operations are now under strict review to prevent similar tactical lapses. Additional rapid

- [Number of Holy Week travelers likely to peak on Wednesday – PITX spox](#) (2026-03-30 15:20)

MANILA, Philippines – The number of people traveling to their provinces for the Holy Week will likely peak on Wednesday, Parañaque Integrated Terminal Exchange (PITX) spokesperson Jason Salvador said. Salvador shared this projection on Monday afternoon in an interview with the media. “Historically speaking, our peak is Wednesday. That is the last working day of

- [Highway Patrol Group deploys 755 cops for Holy Week 2026 security](#) (2026-03-30 15:16)

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippine National Police Highway Patrol Group (PNP-HPG) has deployed 755 personnel as part of security measures for this year’s observance of Holy Week. In an interview with reporters at Camp Crame on Monday morning, HPG spokesperson Lt. Nadame Malang said the 755 personnel were deployed in 92 teams roving across the

- [Carpooling program eyed in Metro Manila to counter fuel price surge](#) (2026-03-30 14:56)

MANILA, Philippines—The Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) is set to release a memorandum circular next week for the proposed carpooling initiative in Metro Manila amid rising fuel prices. In a press briefing on Monday, officials from the MMDA, the Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB), and the Land Transportation Office (LTO) presented the proposed guidelines

- [Another illegal mining operation dismantled in South Cotabato](#) (2026-03-30 14:49)

KORONADAL CITY – Authorities dismantled another illegal “banlas,” or sluice mining operation, in the mountains of Tampakan, South Cotabato, as part of an intensified crackdown against illegal mining in the area. Tampakan Mayor Leonard Escobillo said Monday that the local government, together with police forces, raided a banlas site in Sitio Kampo Kilot, Barangay Pulabato,

- [Maguindanao del Sur village head, driver hurt in another ambush](#) (2026-03-30 14:31)

COTABATO CITY – Another ambush struck Maguindanao del Sur on Monday morning, with the target narrowly escaping death. Capt. Steffi Salanguit, spokesperson for the Police Regional Office–Bangsamoro Autonomous Region (PRO-BAR), said Hadji Mansor Mangelen, village chairperson of Barangay Damalusay, Paglat, Maguindanao del Sur, was slightly injured in the 8:30 a.m. ambush in Barangay Malangit, Pandag

- [Lanao Sur officer slain hours before Maguindanao Sur ambush of 5 cops](#) (2026-03-30 14:20)

COTABATO CITY— Before the ambush in Maguindanao del Sur on March 28 that killed five policemen, a police corporal was killed in a separate ambush in Saguiaran, Lanao del Sur, police in the Bangsamoro Region said Monday. [READ: PNP eyes retaliatory attack in terror group’s Maguindanao ambush of cops](#) Capt. Steffi Salangit, spokesperson for the

- [Traffic delays some Bicol trips from PITX](#) (2026-03-30 14:16)

MANILA, Philippines – Some passengers at the Parañaque Integrated Terminal Exchange (PITX) reported delays in their scheduled trips to the Bicol region on Monday. In a text message to the Inquirer, PITX Senior Corporate Affairs Officer Kolyn Calbasa said the delays of the buses going to Bicol is caused by “usual traffic.” The Inquirer surveyed

- [PNP beefs up deployment to 59,000 cops for Holy Week 2026](#) (2026-03-30 14:12)

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippine National Police (PNP) has deployed 59,416 law enforcers for security measures during this year’s observance of Holy Week, an increase from the 55,000 personnel it previously said it would deploy. In a press briefing at Camp Crame on Monday, PNP spokesperson Brig. Gen. Randulf Tuaño said the police force deployed

- [2 lawyers filing impeachment complaint vs. Comelec chief, commissioners](#) (2026-03-30 13:51)

MANILA, Philippines — Two lawyers are set to file an impeachment complaint against Commission on Elections (Comelec) Chairman George Erwin Garcia and six commissioners over alleged institutional misconduct in the May 2022 and 2025 elections. Eldrige Marvin Aceron, founding partner of Aceron & Attorneys and founder of the Aceron Public Interest and Legal Association, and Sikini

- [Fisherman reported missing in Zambales returns home safely](#) (2026-03-30 13:41)

SAN ANTONIO, Zambales — A fisherman reported missing in Cabangan town in this province was later found safe, the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) Zambales confirmed on Monday (March 30). According to PCG reports, 59-year-old Condrado del Rosario left for a fishing trip on March 28 and was expected to return the following day, March 29,

- [Tagbilaran City launches ‘Libreng Sakay’ program for commuters](#) (2026-03-30 13:38)

TAGBILARAN CITY — The city government has launched its “Libreng Sakay” program, providing free transportation to help commuters cope with rising costs and ongoing transport challenges. Six buses have been deployed across various routes, offering free rides to residents from Monday to Saturday. The service operates during peak hours: 6 a.m. to 9 a.m. and

- [Fuel hoarding, profiteering cases rise to 6 after Albay buy-bust ops](#) (2026-03-30 13:31)

MANILA, Philippines – The number of fuel hoarding and profiteering cases has risen to six after police operatives entrapped a man in Ligao City last week for allegedly possessing fuel worth P2 million, the Philippine National Police said Monday. The suspect was arrested on Thursday and

allegedly found with storage containers holding about 1,200 liters

- [450 Iloilo City cops deployed for Holy Week, summer](#) (2026-03-30 13:18)

ILOILO CITY — As Holy Week begins, the Iloilo City Police Office (ICPO) has activated extensive security measures, deploying 450 personnel to ensure the safety of residents and visitors throughout the city. The deployment is part of the Philippine National Police's (PNP) nationwide "Ligtas SUMVAC 2026," a security operation running from March 29 to May

- [Pilgrims find healing at Calapan's Benedictine abbey](#) (2026-03-30 13:08)

CALAPAN CITY, Oriental Mindoro — In the quiet hills of Barangay Salong here, where the wind moves gently through trees and prayer seems to linger in the air, the Our Lady Mother of Divine Providence Abbey has become more than a monastery. For many, especially during Holy Week, it is a refuge — a place

- [PNP seizes P2-billion smuggled cigarettes in Q1, crackdown continues](#) (2026-03-30 12:39)

MANILA, Philippines – The Philippine National Police (PNP) confiscated over P2 billion worth of smuggled cigarettes nationwide in the first quarter of 2026, with efforts ongoing to identify those behind the illegal tobacco trade. There were 3,153 anti-smuggling cigarette operations, conducted from January 1 to March 29, 2026, led to the arrest of 1,187 individuals.

- [PCG rescuers save boy who fell overboard in Zambales](#) (2026-03-30 12:21)

SAN ANTONIO, Zambales — A three-year-old boy who accidentally fell from a boat about five meters off Baracca Pier in Subic town on Sunday was successfully rescued. According to a report from the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) Zambales, the boy's 61-year-old father was engaged in recreational fishing aboard the FBCA Ariman Express with his two

- [Gatchalian revives call for social media ban for 16-year-olds and under](#) (2026-03-30 11:58)

MANILA, Philippines — Sen. Sherwin Gatchalian on Monday renewed his call to ban social media for minors 16 years old and under, following Indonesia's move to block children from high-risk platforms. In a press release, Gatchalian cited results from the 2022 Program for International Student Assessment. This study found that every additional hour 15-year-old Filipino students

- [Mindoro lawyers bring legal aid, healing programs to women, kids](#) (2026-03-30 11:57)

CALAPAN CITY, Oriental Mindoro — Members of the Integrated Bar of the Philippines (IBP) Oriental Mindoro Chapter conducted a series of legal aid and community outreach activities in observance of National Women's Month, reaching vulnerable sectors across the province. On Saturday afternoon, March 29, at Bahay Kanlungan, a shelter for abused women and children, volunteer

- [Fire guts construction establishment, 9 houses in Calapan City](#) (2026-03-30 11:45)

CALAPAN CITY, Oriental Mindoro — Two days before the end of Fire Prevention Month, a fire of undetermined origin gutted the warehouse, office, and canteen of a construction company in Barangay Lumangbayan, along with at least nine nearby houses, early morning on Sunday. Dennis Escosora, head of the Calapan City Disaster Risk Reduction and Management

- [OIL PRICE WATCH as of March 30, 2026](#) (2026-03-30 11:42)

MANILA, Philippines – Local fuel prices are once again under close watch as the Philippines braces for potential increases at the end of the month, though motorists may catch a brief respite. Based on the first four trading sessions this week, diesel prices are projected to rise by P11 to P12 per liter, while gasoline

- [After failed job hunts, 53-year-old helper ‘stranded’ at QC terminal](#) (2026-03-30 11:40)

MANILA, Philippines – Early travelers gathered at a bus terminal in Quezon City on Monday, heading to their provinces as early as possible to avoid the Holy Week rush. Among them was Carmen Pepito Dela-Cruz, 53, who has been staying at the Victory Liner Terminal Cubao since the weekend. But unlike most passengers, she has

- [Army officer killed, 2 soldiers hurt, NPA rebel caught in Mindoro clash](#) (2026-03-30 11:31)

LUCENA CITY — A junior Army officer was killed, two soldiers were wounded, and an alleged New People’s Army (NPA) rebel was captured during an encounter in San Jose, Occidental Mindoro, on Sunday. In a report sent to the Inquirer Monday morning, the Army’s 2nd Infantry Division, based at Camp Capinpin in Tanay, Rizal, said

- [PNP probes local police chief over possible lapses in Maguindanao ambush](#) (2026-03-30 11:26)

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippine National Police (PNP) is investigating whether the Maguindanao del Sur police chief had any lapses in connection with the ambush in Shariff Aguak town that killed five police officers and wounded three others. In a press briefing in Camp Crame on Monday, PNP spokesperson Brig. Gen. Randulf Tuaño noted that

- [8 bus firms to face sanctions over illegal fare hikes](#) (2026-03-30 11:22)

MANILA, Philippines — Eight bus companies are facing possible sanctions after they were found to have illegally implemented a fare increase amid rising fuel prices, authorities said Monday. The Parañaque Integrated Terminal Exchange (PITX) reported that the bus firms, all operating routes to the Bicol Region, imposed unauthorized fare hikes over the weekend. PITX Senior

- [Juvenile grass owl set free in Apayao during Earth Hour](#) (2026-03-30 11:16)

TUGUEGARAO CITY — In a symbolic celebration of Earth Hour last week, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources–CENRO Calanasan released a juvenile Philippine Grass Owl (*Tyto longimembris amaurotata*) back into its natural habitat on Saturday, March 28, at 8 p.m. Dubbed the “Earth Owl” conservation action, the release coincided with the global Earth Hour

- [Gas station closures drop to 365 as supply improves, says PNP](#) (2026-03-30 11:07)

MANILA, Philippines — The number of gas stations that have closed due to supply constraints has dropped to 365, according to the Philippine National Police's (PNP) monitoring as of Monday, March 30. READ: Fuel shortage forces 425 gas stations to close temporarily – PNP Data presented by the PNP to the media in a briefing

- [New clash reported in Occidental Mindoro after March 24 encounter](#) (2026-03-30 11:02)

CALAPAN CITY, Oriental Mindoro — Government forces clashed anew with suspected communist rebels in Sitio Salapay on Sunday afternoon, just days after a similar encounter in another village in the same town, authorities said. In a report, the Occidental Mindoro Police Provincial Office said the latest firefight broke out at 2:20 p.m. in Barangay Monteclaro

- [Holy Week is an opportunity to visit family, most PITX passengers say](#) (2026-03-30 10:56)

MANILA, Philippines – Visiting families are among the motivators of those traveling via buses at the Parañaque Integrated Terminal Exchange (PITX) for the Holy Week. With many going to their provinces as early as Holy Monday, the Inquirer spoke to a couple of individuals awaiting to board their respective buses. Among them was Nilay, who

- [PNP eyes retaliatory attack in terror group's Maguindanao ambush of cops](#) (2026-03-30 10:55)

MANILA, Philippines — The ambush that killed five police officers and wounded three more in Maguindanao del Sur over the weekend may have been a retaliation from a local terrorist group (LTG), the Philippine National Police (PNP) said on Monday. In a press briefing in Camp Crame, PNP spokesperson Brig. Gen. Randulf Tuaño detailed that

- [P651M of P2.5B subsidy to drivers, operators given – LTFRB](#) (2026-03-30 10:53)

MANILA, Philippines — Over P651 million of the P2.5 billion fuel subsidy has already been disbursed to public utility vehicle (PUV) drivers and operators nationwide, according to the Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB). In a press release on Monday, the LTFRB said chairperson Atty. Vigor Mendoza II has instructed all regional directors to ensure

- [New voter registrations in Negros Island Region reach 172,680](#) (2026-03-30 10:52)

BACOLOD CITY—New voter registrants in the Negros Island Region (NIR) have reached 172,680 as of March 28, the Commission on Elections (Comelec) NIR reported on Sunday. The figure reflects 7,313 new applications processed across Negros Occidental, Negros Oriental, and Siquijor from March 23 to 28, the Comelec said. Negros Occidental remains the largest contributor, accounting

- [Biodiesel project offers Bacolod fishers relief from rising fuel costs](#) (2026-03-30 10:44)

BACOLOD CITY— Deputy House Speaker and Bacolod Rep. Alfredo Abelardo “Albee” Benitez launched a pioneering biodiesel project to support local fisherfolk at the Community Center of Las Palmas Subdivision in Barangay Taculing, Bacolod City, on Monday. “As fuel prices continue to rise, we need practical solutions that can help ease costs at the community level,”

- [Tacloban gas station halts operations due to fuel shortage](#) (2026-03-30 10:35)

TACLOBAN CITY — A gasoline station in this city ceased operations on Sunday, after reportedly running out of fuel supply. The station, located in one of the city’s busiest areas, did not indicate when it would resume operations. “Our fuel supply has temporarily run out. We apologize for the inconvenience and appreciate your understanding,” the

- [Fire erupts atop Mount Banahaw; probe underway](#) (2026-03-30 10:25)

LUCENA CITY – A fire of still undetermined origin broke out atop Mount Banahaw in Quezon province late Sunday afternoon. “We do not yet have verified information because we only learned about it through social media last night,” said Magtanggol Barrion, a forest ranger of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), in an

- [New Cavitet C5 Link-Segment 3B to be toll-free in April, says Marcos](#) (2026-03-30 10:05)

MANILA, Philippines — President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. on Monday announced that the newly opened Cavitet C5 Link-Segment 3B will be toll-free for the entire month of April. The two-kilometer connector road is expected to reduce travel time from Taguig City to Parañaque City to just 15 minutes from 1.5 hours. It is projected to serve around

- [P6.1-M ‘shabu’ seized, 2 ‘high-value’ targets nabbed in Lucena City](#) (2026-03-30 10:04)

LUCENA CITY — Anti-narcotics operatives seized over P6.1 million worth of suspected shabu (crystal meth) as well as arrested two alleged high-value targets in a buy-bust operation in this capital city of Quezon province on Sunday afternoon. Lt. Col. Ryan Hernandez, Lucena City police chief, identified the suspects in a spot report by their aliases

- [PITX logs over 51,000 passengers on Holy Monday morning](#) (2026-03-30 09:54)

MANILA, Philippines — On Holy Monday morning, a total of 51,030 individuals were recorded at the Parañaque Integrated Terminal Exchange (PITX). The figure was logged as of 9 a.m., according to PITX Senior Corporate Affairs Officer Kolyn Calbasa. Some passengers were seen carrying luggage as they prepared to return to their provinces for the Holy Week. However,

- [New direct ferry links Pola and Batangas, cuts travel time](#) (2026-03-30 09:41)

CALAPAN CITY, Oriental Mindoro — A new direct sea route linking the town of Pola and Batangas City has begun operations, with additional trips set for early April to meet rising travel demand ahead of the summer season. The ferry service, operated by Island Water, launched its initial trip on March 28, departing Batangas City

- [DOTr warns bus firms: illegal fare hikes may lead to suspension](#) (2026-03-30 09:04)

MANILA, Philippines — A show cause order and the possible suspension of licenses may be imposed on bus companies that hiked fares despite the suspension of the increase, Transportation Secretary Giovanni Lopez warned on Monday. This came after reports that some bus companies at the Parañaque Integrated Terminal Exchange (PITX) implemented fare increases. READ: Marcos orders

- [Currimaos, Ilocos Norte suspends fest activities, cites energy emergency](#) (2026-03-30 08:25)

CURRIMAO, Ilocos Norte — The municipal government of Currimaos in Ilocos Norte has announced the suspension of some activities of the annual Dinaklisan Festival, traditionally held on the last week of April. This move is in compliance with the national government's directive under Executive Order No. 110 declaring a state of national energy emergency. In a

- [Hot, humid weather to prevail on Monday, March 30](#) (2026-03-30 07:27)

MANILA, Philippines — Hot and humid conditions with chances of isolated rain showers or thunderstorms are expected to prevail over the country on Monday, March 30, according to the state weather bureau. In its morning weather forecast, the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) said the ridge of the high-pressure area (HPA) currently

- [Pool cave in Dinagat Islands temporary closed to visitors](#) (2026-03-30 07:00)

BUTUAN CITY — The local government of Libjo in Dinagat Islands has ordered the temporary closure of the Miracle Pool Cave in Barangay Plaridel, citing conservation and site management needs. The closure begins on Friday and will stay in effect until further notice, according to the Libjo tourism office. “The temporary closure aims to conserve the

- [1M barrels of diesel expected this week, good for 5 days](#) (2026-03-30 05:50)

MANILA, Philippines — The first batch of the more than 1 million barrels of diesel procured by the government is expected to arrive this week and would be enough to cover domestic demand for five days, according to Executive Secretary Ralph Recto. “[T]he oil diplomacy ably conducted by energy officials led by Secretary Sharon Garin

- [SSS considers relief plans for employers, members](#) (2026-03-30 05:45)

MANILA, Philippines — The Social Security System (SSS) is considering a moratorium on loan payments for its members, along with a condonation program for employers, as part of its relief measures amid the country's economic challenges. According to SSS President Robert Joseph de Claro, the measures being considered aim to provide immediate relief to members

- [Rights group seeks probe of antiterror law abuses](#) (2026-03-30 05:30)

MANILA, Philippines — Amnesty International Philippines has urged the government to conduct a “prompt, independent, impartial and transparent” investigation of alleged abuses in the implementation of the Anti-Terrorism Act after women and child rights activist Ma. Salome “Sally” Crisostomo-Ujano was cleared of rebellion charges. The rights group also called for a halt to any form

- [PH celebrates 32 years of internet connectivity](#) (2026-03-30 05:25)

MANILA, Philippines — The Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT) on Sunday vowed to further expand free internet access across the Philippines as it marked the 32nd year of its first connection to the internet on March 29, 1994. “Under the leadership of the DICT, efforts continue to expand free internet access to more

- [Explain corruption charges, lawmakers urge VP Sara Duterte](#) (2026-03-30 05:15)

MANILA, Philippines — Deputy Speaker Paolo Ortega on Sunday warned Vice President Sara Duterte that her trust rating may decline further if she continues to refuse to address the corruption allegations against her. Ortega made the prediction after a Pulse Asia survey result, which showed that over half—or 51.5 percent—of those who distrusted her pointed

- [Ex-lawmaker undeterred by criminal conviction, online attacks](#) (2026-03-30 05:05)

MANILA, Philippines — While she may be keeping a lower public profile these days, former ACT Teachers Rep. France Castro still has her Facebook account set to private to spare her children from all the harassment and abuse directed at her on social media. “My children can see that ... so until now, my Facebook

- [Pasig-Marikina river project rolls out new tech to boost flood control](#) (2026-03-30 05:00)

MANILA, Philippines — Amid the still unresolved scandal over the government’s flood control projects, a project by the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH)—the agency in the center of that controversy—is introducing new technology to bolster the flood defense of Metro Manila. The department’s Pasig-Marikina River Channel Improvement Project (PMRCIP), which had been ongoing

- [P1.2B in Dole aid out after Holy Week](#) (2026-03-30 04:55)

MANILA, Philippines — The Department of Labor and Employment (Dole) will roll out P1.2 billion after the Holy Week as assistance to “most vulnerable” workers, particularly those from the transport sector, affected by the fuel crisis. The agency’s spokesperson and Assistant Secretary Lennard Serrano said Dole is studying proposals to place it under the department’s

- [DPWH opens more bypass roads](#) (2026-03-30 04:50)

MANILA, Philippines — President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. has ordered the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) to open more bypass roads in the country to help reduce gasoline consumption amid the oil price hikes. In a statement on Friday, DPWH Secretary Vince Dizon

said aside from saving on gasoline, opening bypass roads would also

- [BARMM execs condemn ambush that killed 5 cops](#) (2026-03-30 04:45)

COTABATO CITY, BARMM, Philippines — Authorities in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) condemned the deadly ambush in Shariff Aguak, Maguindanao del Sur, that left five police officers dead and three others critically injured last Saturday night. Capt. Steffi Salanguit, spokesperson for the Police Regional Office BARMM, identified the slain officers as Patrolmen

- [‘Palaspas’ costs rise amid fuel crisis](#) (2026-03-30 04:40)

LUCENA CITY, QUEZON, Philippines — As church bells tolled for Palm Sunday and devotees raised woven palm fronds in blessing rites across the country, this year’s quiet ritual of buying “palaspas” came at a higher cost. Filipino Catholics marked the start of Holy Week yesterday with the traditional blessing of palms, commemorating Jesus Christ’s triumphant

- [Subsidized rice program benefits 5,000 in Leyte town](#) (2026-03-30 04:35)

TACLOBAN CITY, LEYTE, Philippines — At least 5,000 residents in Palo town, Leyte, benefited from the expanded rollout of the government’s “Benteng Bigas Meron Na” program last Friday, as part of ongoing efforts to mitigate the impact of rising food prices. The distribution, spearheaded by the regional office of the Department of Agriculture (DA) in

- [DA eyes Subic Freeport for biosecurity facility](#) (2026-03-30 04:30)

SUBIC BAY FREEPORT, Philippines — The Department of Agriculture (DA) is exploring the establishment of a Bio-Safe examination facility inside this freeport, to bolster the country’s defenses against agricultural smuggling and prevent the spread of animal diseases. In a statement last Friday, the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority (SBMA) said officials from the DA-Inspectorate and Enforcement

- [No jackpot winners in Ultra, Super Lotto draws on March 29](#) (2026-03-29 21:57)

MANILA, Philippines—No bettor won the jackpot prize for Ultra Lotto 6/58 and SuperLotto 6/49 draws on Sunday, according to the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office. The Ultra Lotto 6/58 draw had the combination 45-49-34-52-09-28 with a jackpot prize of ₱75 million, The SuperLotto 6/49 drew came out with the 15-09-33-18-22-06 combination which had a jackpot of

- [Iloilo malls adjust operating hours amid energy conservation drive](#) (2026-03-29 21:53)

ILOILO CITY — Major shopping malls across Iloilo are implementing shorter and adjusted operating hours beginning Monday, March 30, aligning with the national government’s intensified energy conservation campaign. Mall operators including Festive Walk Iloilo, SM City Iloilo, Robinsons Iloilo and Jaro, Gaisano Capital branches, and Vista Mall Iloilo announced revised schedules that generally reduce weekday

- [CDO supporters mark ex-president Duterte’ s birth anniversary](#) (2026-03-29 21:46)

CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY—Festivities, food and entertainment marked the 81st birth anniversary celebration here of detained former president Rodrigo Duterte as close to a thousand supporters gathered on Saturday night. Amid chants and cheers, Duterte’ s supporters listened to Talaandig musician Rodelio “Waway” Saway and other local performers until 10 p.m. at the Kiosko Kagawasan in

- [Palm Sunday Mass in Valencia, Bukidnon highlights faith amid crisis](#) (2026-03-29 21:24)

VALENCIA CITY, Bukidnon — Catholics here gathered on Palm Sunday for a Holy Mass to commemorate Jesus Christ’ s triumphant entry into Jerusalem, signaling the start of Holy Week. Rev. Fr. Jojo Sumastre of St. Bernadette Parish in Barangay Batangan, Valencia City, celebrated Mass at a chapel inside a private subdivision, which included a reenactment of

- [Loan relief for PUV, TNVS operators pushed](#) (2026-03-29 19:15)

MANILA, Philippines — Senior Citizens party-list Rep. Rodolfo “Ompong” Ordanes on Sunday called on President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. to direct the government to extend payment reliefs on loans incurred by public utility vehicle (PUV) and transportation network vehicle service (TNVS) operators from April to June. Ordanes made the appeal as transport operators grappled with

- [Mayon Volcano update: Effusive eruption on its 83rd day](#) (2026-03-29 19:08)

MANILA, Philippines — Mayon Volcano produced ash clouds on Sunday and has reached its 83rd day of effusive eruption, the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs) said. READ: Mayon Volcano emits lava fountain The Phivolcs, in an advisory, said minor strombolian activities were recorded in Mayon Volcano at exactly 12:30 a.m. and 6:46 a.m.,

- [500 prisoners moved from Bilibid to new Iwahig facility](#) (2026-03-29 18:43)

MANILA, Philippines — The Bureau of Corrections (BuCor) on Sunday reported the transfer of 500 persons deprived of liberty (PDLs) from New Bilibid Prison in Muntinlupa City to the newly constructed dormitory at Iwahig Prison and Penal Farm (IPPF) in Puerto Princesa, Palawan. BuCor Director General Gregorio Catapang Jr. said the 500 PDLs arrived at

- [House panel hearing on Sara Duterte impeach case seen until end of May](#) (2026-03-29 18:31)

MANILA, Philippines — The House of Representatives hearing on the impeachment case of Vice President Sara Duterte may wrap up by the end of May, said the lower chamber’ s committee on justice vice chair San Juan City Rep. Ysabel Zamora on Sunday. Zamora made the pronouncement as the House committee on justice continued to hold

- [Solon sees further decline in Sara Duterte’ s trust rating](#) (2026-03-29 18:21)

MANILA, Philippines — Deputy Speaker Paolo Ortega V on Sunday warned Vice President Sara Duterte that her trust rating may decline further if she continues to refuse to address the corruption allegations against her. Ortega made the prediction after citing Pulse Asia survey results which showed that over half—or 51.5 percent—of those who distrusted her

- [Medialdea hospitalized, to undergo ‘medical procedure’ – Sen. Bong Go](#) (2026-03-29 16:47)

MANILA, Philippines — Senator Christopher “Bong” Go on Saturday said Salvador Medialdea, former President Rodrigo Duterte’s executive secretary, was hospitalized and is set to undergo a medical procedure. Go bared Medialdea’s condition in a Facebook statement, after asking the public to pray for him. “Nananawagan si Senator Bong Go sa mga kababayan natin na sama-sama

- [3 nabbed as PDEA dismantles Subic drug den](#) (2026-03-29 15:54)

SAN ANTONIO, Zambales — Authorities dismantled a makeshift drug den in Barangay Calapacuan in Subic, Zambales on Saturday and seized suspected methamphetamine hydrochloride (shabu) valued at about P136,000. The Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA) in Region 3 reported that a buy-bust operation was conducted at around 5:40 p.m. in the area led to the arrest

- [Asean AIPA preparatory meetings to be conducted online – Speaker Dy](#) (2026-03-29 15:01)

MANILA, Philippines — Speaker Faustino Dy III on Sunday announced that the country will be scaling down Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA) meetings by shifting all preparatory meetings to virtual platforms. Dy, in a statement, said in-person activities for the AIPA meetings will only be limited to the General Assembly in

- [Dutertes’ backers launch Isda Bohol, celebrate ex-president’s 81st birthday](#) (2026-03-29 14:08)

TAGBILARAN CITY — Supporters of former President Rodrigo Duterte gathered in large numbers at Plaza Rizal in this city on Saturday, March 28, for the formal launch of the Inday Sara Duterte Alliance (Isda)-Bohol. The occasion coincided with the former president’s 81st birthday. The gathering opened with a motorcade at around 4 p.m., followed by

- [Lawmaker urges gov’t to build coastal petroleum storage facilities](#) (2026-03-29 13:53)

MANILA, Philippines—The government should establish petroleum storage facilities so that the country can have buffer stocks in times of crisis, a lawmaker said on Sunday. In a statement, House Minority Leader Marcelino “Nonoy” Libanan called on the state-owned Philippine National Oil Co. (PNOC) to invest in coastal petroleum storage facilities. He believes this situation will

- [Intensified mental health programs pushed amid rising suicide cases](#) (2026-03-29 13:51)

MANILA, Philippines — Senator Sherwin Gatchalian on Sunday called on the government to intensify mental health programs amid a rise in cases of suicide in Metro Manila. Gatchalian made the appeal after the National Capital Region Police Office recorded 111 cases of suicide from January 1 to March 23, 2026. READ: Suicide cases in NCR

- [9,000 cops deployed for Lent in Central Luzon](#) (2026-03-29 13:33)

MABALACAT CITY, Pampanga — Around 9,000 police officers have been deployed across Central Luzon for public safety during the observance of Holy Week, the Police Regional Office 3 (PRO3) said on Sunday, March 29. In a statement, PRO3 said its personnel will be augmented by about 1,000 officers from other police units and more than

- [DICT vows wider free internet as Ph marks 32nd connectivity anniversary](#) (2026-03-29 12:45)

MANILA, Philippines — The Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT) has pledged to expand free internet access across the country. The pronouncement comes on Sunday as the Philippines marks its 32nd anniversary of its first connection to the internet. According to the DICT, this year's celebration reaffirms the agency's mission "where no Filipino is

- [SSS eyes loan relief, condonation amid economic challenges](#) (2026-03-29 12:31)

MANILA, Philippines — The Social Security System (SSS) said it is eyeing a loan moratorium for its members, along with a condonation program for employers, as part of its relief measures amid the country's economic challenges. According to SSS President Robert Joseph de Claro, the measures under consideration aim to provide immediate relief to members

- [Robbery at Catbalogan terminal turns deadly; 1 suspect killed, another hurt](#) (2026-03-29 11:48)

TACLOBAN CITY — A robbery at a transport terminal in Catbalogan City escalated into a deadly shootout on Saturday evening, March 28, leaving one suspect dead, another wounded, and a third still at large, police said. In a report, the Police Regional Office 8 based in Palo, said the incident occurred at 7:35 p.m. at

- [Manhunt on for killers of 5 cops in Maguindanao del Sur ambush](#) (2026-03-29 10:41)

MANILA, Philippines — A manhunt was ordered on Sunday following an ambush in Maguindanao del Sur that left five police officers dead and three others seriously injured. The victims from the 2nd Provincial Mobile Force Company were returning from patrol operations on March 28 when unidentified assailants attacked them in Shariff Aguak town. Police and

- [LTFRB orders inspection of buses, PUVs ahead of Holy Week exodus](#) (2026-03-29 10:25)

MANILA, Philippines — The Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB) on Sunday directed all its regional offices to hold roadworthiness inspections of buses and public

utility vehicles (PUVs) ahead of the influx of travelers during Holy Week. READ: LTFRB: Over1,200 passenger buses granted special permits for Holy Week According to the LTFRB chair

- [Rising fuel costs lift ‘palaspas’ prices this Palm Sunday](#) (2026-03-29 10:02)

LUCENA CITY — Vendors of “palaspas” (woven palm fronds) raised prices this year, passing on higher production and transport costs fueled by continuing oil price hikes amid the war in Middle East. “All prices have gone up, so we were also forced to increase the price of palaspas,” said Maria Sembrano, 65, who has been

- [Iloilo City forms crisis council amid fuel crisis](#) (2026-03-29 09:46)

ILOILO CITY — The city government has created a Crisis Management Council to safeguard the supply of essential goods and stabilize public services. The formation of the panel comes as the country grapples with rising fuel prices and energy shortage linked to the Middle East war. Mayor Raisa S. Treñas signed Executive Order No. 035,

- [OIL PRICE WATCH as of March 29, 2026 \(Sunday\)](#) (2026-03-29 09:10)

MANILA, Philippines — Fuel prices across the country are expected to rise again at the end of March. A source told Inquirer that the per-liter-price of diesel could go up by P11 to 12. There might be a P3 per-liter hike in gasoline or no change for the moment. Oil companies schedule price adjustments on

- [Ang Paglilibing: The solemn cast of Good Friday processions](#) (2026-03-29 08:00)

MANILA, Philippines — As the sun sets on Good Friday, thousands — sometimes millions — of Filipinos join a solemn candlelight procession called Sto. Entierro, which depicts Christ’s final journey from the cross to his tomb. The procession, a central component of Holy Week, or Semana Santa, in the Philippines, is held after the liturgical

- [Sugar mills urged to increase trucking allowance for farmers](#) (2026-03-29 07:24)

BACOLOD CITY — An official of the Sugar Regulatory Administration (SRA) on Wednesday called on sugar mills to increase the trucking allowance for sugar farmers amid rising fuel prices. In a statement, board member David Andrew Sanson, the planters representative, said he issued an appeal through a letter sent to sugar mills nationwide. “We respectfully request

- [Marcos urges unity, selfless service among Filipinos this Holy Week](#) (2026-03-29 06:00)

MANILA, Philippines — President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. called on Filipinos to embrace unity and help one another during the observance of Holy Week as countries around the world face crises due to the ongoing war in the Middle East. “May this Holy Week strengthen our resolve to become a nation guided by faith, united in

- [14-year-old qualifies as candidate for US state governor](#) (2026-03-29 05:42)

STOWE, Vermont — Looking back, gubernatorial candidate Dean Roy says his political ambitions started in the eighth grade. And by that he means, last year. After working as a legislative page at the Vermont Statehouse, the 14-year-old freshman at Stowe High School now has his sights set on the corner office. In November, he’ ll be

- [Passenger surge still seen despite conflict in Middle East](#) (2026-03-29 05:41)

MANILA, Philippines — There may still be a surge of travelers at the country’ s main gateway, Ninoy Aquino International Airport (Naia), over the Holy Week period, despite the expected upward pressure on airline tickets due to the war in the Middle East. This is according to private operator New Naia Infra Corp. (NNIC), which projects

- [Noted Baguio citizen, Inquirer lensman die in river tragedy](#) (2026-03-29 05:40)

BAGUIO CITY, Philippines — The smiling faces of grade school children would be the last images captured by a group of Baguio photographers before a fatal off-road accident claimed two lives on Friday afternoon. Rodolfo “Ompong” Tan, a prominent Baguio lensman, 2022 Outstanding Citizen of Baguio awardee and community pillar, died from severe head injuries

- [A quiet sanctuary of prayer, hope grows in Mindoro](#) (2026-03-29 05:39)

VICTORIA, ORIENTAL MINDORO, Philippines — What began as a simple farmhouse meant for family rest has quietly grown into a sanctuary of prayer, healing and renewal in the heart of Mindoro. Nestled in the rural village of Canaan in the town of Victoria, the Ilang Sanctuary of Prayer stands today not as a commercial retreat

- [Pag-asa Island soon to have its first Catholic church](#) (2026-03-29 05:39)

MANILA, Philippines — Work will soon begin for the construction of a Catholic church on Pag-asa (Thitu) Island for its permanent residents, as the government continues to reinforce Filipino presence in the West Philippine Sea. “The primary objective is to fulfill and nurture the spiritual needs of our local residents,” Rear Adm. Jay Tarriela of

- [Court to inspect Quiboloy sect’ s properties in Davao, NCR](#) (2026-03-29 05:38)

MANILA, Philippines — A Pasig City court has ordered the inspection of six properties, including two in the National Capital Region (NCR), belonging to the Kingdom of Jesus Christ (KOJC), the sect founded by televangelist and alleged sex offender Apollo Quiboloy. In a nine-page order on Friday in connection with the pastor’ s human trafficking case,

- [Duterte spends 2nd consecutive birthday in ICC detention](#) (2026-03-29 05:37)

MANILA, Philippines — Former President Rodrigo Duterte marked his 81st birthday in detention at The Hague, the Netherlands, on Saturday as the International Criminal Court (ICC) continued to deliberate on his case for alleged crimes against humanity over his deadly “war on drugs” . The ICC Pre-Trial Chamber I is set to rule not later than

- [House execs assert power to impeach](#) (2026-03-29 05:36)

MANILA, Philippines — While they respect the Supreme Court as the “final arbiter of constitutional and legal questions,” Batangas Rep. Gerville Luistro reiterated that the power to initiate an impeachment complaint and decide whether it should proceed to a Senate trial rests on the House of Representatives alone. “This is a responsibility we do not

- [Seminars, book forums, shows to mark National Literature Month](#) (2026-03-29 05:35)

MANILA, Philippines — Hot on the heels of the Philippine Book Festival, which drew throngs of readers—and which gives the lie to the oft-repeated statement that Filipinos don’t read—is April as National Literature Month, as proclaimed by the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA). Literature is one of the seven major arts which

- [Lopez Inc. family feud explodes into leadership battle](#) (2026-03-29 05:34)

MANILA, Philippines — A leadership battle has erupted within the Lopez family after a court blocked efforts to remove Federico “Piki” Lopez as president of Lopez Inc., the group’s holding firm. In a writ of preliminary injunction dated March 26, a Mandaluyong City court barred the enforcement of the board resolutions passed on Feb. 27

- [DOE, DTI urged to consider price cap on LPG](#) (2026-03-29 05:33)

MANILA, Philippines — Sen. Sherwin Gatchalian on Saturday urged the Department of Energy (DOE) and the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) to impose a price cap on liquified petroleum gas (LPG) as its price may increase amid the ongoing crisis in the Middle East. Gatchalian noted the impending price increase of LPG and warned

- [Dole readies P1.2-B fund to help workers during crisis](#) (2026-03-29 05:32)

MANILA, Philippines — The Department of Labor and Employment (Dole) has prepared P1.2 billion in standby funds to help workers who may lose income or jobs as a result of the ongoing energy crisis. The labor department said the fund will be used to “further intensify” its support programs as the government deals with a

- [Gov’t urged: Ask Iran to let PH-bound oil tankers pass](#) (2026-03-29 05:30)

MANILA, Philippines — Senator Sherwin Gatchalian on Saturday said there should be no disruption in oil supply for the country and called on the Marcos administration to open “high-level” talks with Iran to ensure the safe transit of Philippine-bound oil tankers through the Strait of Hormuz, as the tension in the Middle East continues. The

- [Biliran province cancels annual festival amid fuel crisis](#) (2026-03-29 00:03)

TACLOBAN CITY, LEYTE, Philippines — The provincial government of Biliran has cancelled its annual Hudyaka Festival for May 2026, citing the ongoing fuel crisis and global uncertainties affecting oil prices. Governor Rogelio Espina, in announcing the decision, said funds originally intended for the province-wide cultural celebration will instead be redirected to address the

more urgent

Source: The Manila Times

- [Palace warns public against spreading misinformation about energy crisis](#) (2026-04-05 05:28)

MANILA, Philippines — Malacañang on Sunday warned the public against deliberately fabricating stories and spreading misinformation and disinformation online regarding the energy crisis. In a statement, Presidential Communications Office acting Secretary Dave Gomez warned that people who spread misinformation “will be held to account to the fullest extent of the law.” Gomez was referring to social media posts which circulated during Holy Week telling of a supposed “energy lockdown starting April 20, 2026” and urged citizens to prepare necessities such as power banks, solar equipment, food, medicines, and water. “We remind users of social media platforms that publishing false news is punishable by up to six months imprisonment under Article 154 of the Revised Penal Code. When committed online, the penalty is doubled under the Cybercrime Prevention Act,” Gomez said. “Spreading fake news and disinformation undermines public trust, destabilizes our economy, and threatens the welfare of every Filipino during this time of energy emergency,” he added. He said that “there will be zero tolerance” for parties who maliciously and intentionally proliferate fake news online “to advance their personal or political vested interest.”

- [Parts of Quezon City, four provinces to have power interruptions due to maintenance works](#) (2026-04-05 04:24)

MANILA, Philippines—Some areas in Quezon City, Bulacan, Laguna, Cavite, and Pampanga will have power interruptions this week because of maintenance work, Meralco said on Sunday. In Quezon City, some parts of Brgy. Kamuning and Brgy. Sacred Heart will have no power on April 8-9 between 11 p.m. and 5 a.m. because of the replacement of electricity facilities and line reconductoring work along Kamuning Road in Bgy. Kamuning. Also, some locations in Brgy. Don Manuel in Mabuhay, Quezon City will have no electricity on April 8 between 8:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. because of line reconductoring works, replacement of electricity facilities and the installation of additional lightning protection devices along Nicanor Ramirez St. Meanwhile, some areas in the villages of Malipampang, Calasag, Telepatio, Calawitan and Pulong Tamo in San Ildefonso, Bulacan, and some parts of Brgy. Pangclara in Candaba, Pampanga will have power interruptions on April 7 between 12:01 a.m. and 1 a.m. because of line reconstruction work along Malipampang-Calasag Road. Some locations in the villages of Balasing and Bulac in Sta. Maria, and some parts of Brgy. Tigbe, Norzagaray in Bulacan will have no power on April 12 between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. because of the installation of electricity facilities. In Cavite, several villages in Alfonso, Gen. Emilio Aguinaldo, Gen. Trias City, Magallanes, Maragondon, Naic, Tanza, Ternate, and Trece Martires City will have short power interruptions on March 5 between 7 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. due to load normalization activities related to the NGCP Tuy-Dasmariñas 500

kilovolt line project. All of Bamboo Heights Subd. in the villages of Pasong Kawayan 1 and Pasong Kawayan 2 in General Trias City will have no power on April 8 between 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. due to line reconstruction works. In Laguna, some areas in Barangay II (Tibag), Calamba City will have no electricity on April 9 between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. because of the installation and replacement of electricity facilities along Tibag Road.

- [LTFRB summons bus operator, driver over viral red-light violation](#) (2026-04-05 03:36)

MANILA, Philippines—The Land Transportation, Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB) summoned a bus operator and its driver after a viral video showed a passenger bus allegedly disregarding a red traffic light. In a statement issued on April 5, LTFRB Chairman Vigor Mendoza II said the bus operator, which holds a franchise for North Luzon routes, and the driver of the vehicle with plate number NAO-4058 were ordered to explain in writing why they should not be penalized for reckless driving. The agency warned that the operator could face suspension or cancellation of its franchise for employing a driver involved in the incident. According to the LTFRB, the video showed the bus speeding through an intersection despite a red light signal, potentially endangering passengers and other road users. Mendoza said the board would also investigate whether other violations were committed, and determine the driver's physical and mental fitness at the time. "This incident compromised not only the safety of passengers but also other road users. We will not let this pass," Mendoza said. The LTFRB chief commended the netizen who uploaded the video, noting that public reporting of traffic violations contributes to enforcing discipline and improving road safety. Both the operator and the driver were directed to submit their written explanation and appear at an online hearing scheduled for April 23. Failure of the operator to respond or attend the hearing would be considered a waiver of the right to be heard and may result in the imposition of a P5,000 penalty.

- [Rise with renewed purpose, Marcos urges Filipinos](#) (2026-04-05 02:59)

MANILA, Philippines—President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. on Easter Sunday called on Filipinos to rise with renewed purpose and translate their faith into concrete action, using the occasion to emphasize the need for compassion, generosity and unity. In his Easter Sunday message, Marcos said he joined the entire Filipino nation in celebrating Easter Sunday, the triumphant culmination of Holy Week and the sacred proclamation of Christ's Resurrection. "On this day, the empty tomb stands as a powerful testament that life conquers death and hope prevails over despair," Marcos said. The President said Easter is a reminder "that sacrifice is never in vain, that suffering is not the end but the beginning of renewal." "In the Resurrection of Christ, we find an unshakable promise that God's grace endures, and that even in our darkest hours, faith will lead us to the light," Marcos said. "As a people known for our resilience and deep faith, let us carry the light of Easter into our daily lives not only in words, but in action," he added. Marcos urged Filipinos to "always choose compassion over indifference, generosity over self-interest, and unity over division." "For in every act of kindness, in every hand extended to help, we become instruments of renewal for our entire nation," he said. "Today, I call on every Filipino to rise with renewed purpose, unyielding hope, and a deep sense of responsibility for

one another. Let us build a nation where kindness is instinct and unity is our strength," he added.

- [Sexagenarian nabbed at NAIA for attempt to smuggle 3 kilos of shabu](#) (2026-04-05 02:46)

MANILA, Philippines—A 62-year-old passenger was arrested at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA) Terminal 1 on Friday, April 3, for attempting to smuggle 3.2 kilograms of suspected shabu from Malaysia. Packets of methamphetamine hydrochloride were discovered by Bureau of Customs (BoC) personnel after x-ray scanners flagged suspicious images in the traveler's luggage at the baggage build-up area. A manual inspection conducted in the presence of the suspect yielded several packages of a white crystalline substance hidden inside a backpack and handbags. Joint operatives from the PNP-Aviation Security Group (Avsegroup) and BoC immediately placed the passenger under arrest. Proper inventory and documentation were performed in the presence of witnesses. The confiscated evidence, valued at P21,216,00, was turned over to the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency. Avsegroup Chief Brig. Gen. Dionisio B. Bartolome lauded the operation, warning that authorities remain vigilant against drug traffickers. "Smuggling drugs is an attack on the safety and peace of our communities," he said.

- [Some areas in Metro Manila, Rizal, Cavite to have water interruptions this week](#) (2026-04-05 02:38)

MANILA, Philippines—Some places in Metro Manila, Rizal and Cavite will have water interruptions this week because of maintenance works and high demand, Manila Water Company Inc. and Maynilad Water Services Inc. said. Manila Water said that some areas in Brgy. Maharlika, Taguig will have water interruptions on April 7-8 between 10 p.m. and 4 a.m. because of step testing activities to detect possible leaks in the system. In Rizal, some parts of Brgy. Manggahan in Rodriguez will have no water on April 6-7 between 10 p.m. and 4 a.m. due to leak repairs along Millex Road while some locations in Brgy. San Roque, Antipolo will have service interruptions on April 6-7 between 10 p.m. and 4 a.m. because of the replacement of a line meter along Marigman Road. Also, some portions of Brgy. Dolores and Brgy. San Isidro in Taytay will have service interruptions on April 6-7 also between 10 p.m. and 4 a.m. because of step testing works along L. Wood Ave, in Taytay. In Cainta, a portion of Brgy. Santo Domingo will have no water on April 8-9 between 10 p.m. and 4 a.m. because of step testing activities. Maynilad announced that in Valenzuela City, some parts of the villages of Gen. T. De Leon, Karuhatan, Malinta, Marulas, Maysan, and Parada will have water interruptions on April 6, 7, and 10 between 12:01 a.m. and 4 a.m. because of network repair and network maintenance activities. In Caloocan, some areas in Brgy. 164 will have water interruptions on April 6-7 between 10 p.m. and 6 a.m. due to the pullout of a faulty pressure reducing valve. In Cavite, several places in the villages of Alapan I-C, Anabu I-A, Anabu I-B, Anabu I-C, Anabu I-D, Anabu I-E, Anabu I-F, Anabu II-A, Anabu II- B, Anabu II-C, Anabu II-D, Anabu II-E, Bayan Luma I, Bayan Luma II, Bayan Luma III, Bayan Luma IV, Bayan Luma V, Bayan Luma VI, Bayan Luma VII, Bayan Luma VIII, Bayan Luma IX, Bukandala III, Bukandala IV, Bukandala V, Carsadang Bago I, Carsadang Bago II, Malagasang 1-A, Malagasang I-B, Malagasang I-C, Malagasang I-D,

Malagasang I-E, Malagasang I-F, Malagasang I-G, Medicion I-B, Poblacion III-B, Poblacion IV-B, Poblacion IV-D, and Tanzang Luma VI will have no water on April 6-10 between 5 a.m. and 12 a.m. because of high demand at the Patindig Araw pumping station.

- [Artemis astronauts preparing for historic lunar flyby](#) (2026-04-05 00:36)

HOUSTON, United States — The Artemis astronauts were gearing up Saturday for their long-anticipated lunar flyby, including reviewing the surface features they must analyze and photograph during their time circling the Moon. "Morale is high on board," commander Reid Wiseman told Houston's Mission Control center as the space crew's work day began. Upon waking around 1635 GMT on Saturday, the astronauts were approximately 169,000 miles (271,979 kilometers) from Earth, and approaching the Moon at 110,700 miles (178,154 kilometers), according to NASA. The next major milestone of the approximately 10-day journey is expected overnight Sunday into Monday, at which point the astronauts will enter the "lunar sphere of influence" -- when the Moon's gravity will have stronger pull on the spacecraft than Earth's. If all proceeds smoothly, as Orion whips around the Moon the astronauts could set a record by venturing farther from Earth than any human before. The astronauts kicked off their day with a meal that included scrambled eggs and coffee, NASA said, and had woken up to the tune of Chappell Roan's pop smash "Pink Pony Club." Wiseman along with fellow Americans Christina Koch and Victor Glover as well as Canadian Jeremy Hansen are on a historic journey around the Moon, which they're soon due to slingshot around. It's a feat Wiseman has dubbed "Herculean" and which humanity has not accomplished in more than half-a-century. Later on Saturday, Glover was due to perform a manual piloting demonstration to provide NASA with more data regarding the spacecraft's performance in deep space. After that, the crew was planning to go over their checklist for documenting their experience traveling around the Moon. The astronauts have had geology training in order to be able to photograph and describe lunar features, including ancient lava flows and impact craters. They'll see the Moon from a unique vantage point compared with the Apollo missions of the 1960s and 70s. Apollo flights flew some 70 miles above the lunar surface, but the Artemis 2 crew will be just over 4,000 miles at their closest approach, which will allow them to see the complete, circular surface of the Moon, including regions near both poles. 'Amazing' The crew has been busy taking photographs including with smartphones, devices NASA recently approved to take aboard spaceflights. The space agency has released images from Orion that included a full portrait of Earth, featuring its deep blue oceans and billowing clouds. NASA official Lakiesha Hawkins praised the photographs taken by commander Wiseman, calling them "amazing" during a briefing Friday. "We continue to learn all about our spacecraft as we operate it in deep space with crew for the first time," Hawkins said. "It's important to remind ourselves of that as we learn a little bit more day by day." The Artemis 2 mission is part of a longer-term plan to repeatedly return to the Moon, with the goal of establishing a permanent lunar base that will offer a platform for further exploration. It's a highly anticipated journey that demands exacting precision -- but there's still room for the astronauts to live out their childhood dreams of spaceflight. "It just makes me feel like a little kid," said Hansen recently, describing the joy of

floating.

- [Israeli says will strike Lebanon-Syria border crossing](#) (2026-04-05 00:32)

BEIRUT, Lebanon — The Israeli military said on Saturday it would strike an area near the main crossing between Syria and Lebanon, urging residents to evacuate immediately as it continued its attacks across Lebanon. Israel has carried out strikes across Lebanon and launched a ground invasion in the south since March 2, when Hezbollah entered the war in the Middle East on the side of its backer Iran. "Due to Hezbollah's use of the Masnaa Crossing for military purposes and smuggling of combat equipment, the (Israeli army) intends to carry out strikes on the crossing in the near future," said the military's Arabic-Language spokesman, Avichay Adraee, urging people to leave the area. A Lebanese security source at the Masnaa border crossing told AFP they were "currently evacuating the crossing following the Israeli threat". In Syria, the General Authority for Borders and Customs public relations director, Mazen Aloush, said the crossing, known as Jdeidet Yabous on the Syrian side, was "exclusively for civilian use and is not used for any military purposes". Aloush added that "in light of the circulating warnings and out of concern for the safety of travellers, traffic through the crossing will be temporarily suspended until any potential risks subside". The Masnaa crossing is the main crossing between Lebanon and Syria, making it a vital trade route for both countries and Lebanon's main land gateway to the rest of the region. Israel previously struck the crossing in October 2024, during its previous war with Hezbollah. The crossing remained closed until Lebanese and Syrian authorities began repair works after a ceasefire the following month. Strikes on Tyre In a statement, Lebanon's health ministry said a strike on Maaraka, near Tyre, killed five people and wounded one. In previous statements, the ministry reported that an Israeli strike on Habbush killed at least two girls and wounded 22 people, while a strike on al-Hawsh near the coastal city of Tyre wounded 18, including a child, three women and three paramedics. The strike on al-Hawsh damaged a nearby major hospital, according to the ministry. The director of the Lebanese Italian Hospital told the state-run National News Agency (NNA) that it would "remain open to provide the necessary medical care" despite the damage. Tens of thousands of people have left Tyre, but around 20,000 remain, including 15,000 displaced from surrounding villages, despite Israeli evacuation warnings covering most of the city and a swathe of the south. Hours after the attack, the Israeli army struck three buildings in and around Tyre it had warned people to evacuate, according to the NNA. The NNA also reported strikes across the country and local media reported that Israeli jets repeatedly broke the sound barrier over several parts of Lebanon, with AFP journalists hearing distant booms in Beirut. An Israeli strike on a cafe near the Qaraoun lake, on the reaches of the West Bekaa portion of the Litani river, wounded several people according to the NNA. 'Unacceptable' attacks The Israeli army on Saturday told residents of Kfar Hatta in southern Lebanon to evacuate ahead of strikes on the town, causing heavy traffic as people escaped according to videos shared online. The Israeli military earlier announced on Saturday the death of a soldier who "fell during combat in southern Lebanon", the 11th killed since the army began ground operations in the country. It also said it struck "more than 140 Hezbollah terrorist infrastructure targets" over the previous two days. After attacking a bridge in

the West Bekaa region in eastern Lebanon on Friday "to prevent the transfer of reinforcements and military equipment", Israel hit it again on Saturday, destroying it completely, the NNA said. West Bekaa is right above Lebanon's south, where Israeli troops have been advancing on the ground. Hezbollah claimed responsibility Saturday for a series of attacks on northern Israeli towns and Israeli troops in southern Lebanese towns near the border, particularly Marun al-Ras, Hula, Ainata and Bayada. The war has displaced upwards of a million people in Lebanon and killed more than 1,400 people in the country, including 54 medics and three Indonesian UN peacekeepers in the south. On Saturday, a UN security official told AFP that Israeli forces destroyed 17 surveillance cameras linked to UNIFIL's main headquarters in Naqura. The UN peacekeeping force has been caught in the crossfire in southern Lebanon since the start of the war, with Hezbollah launching attacks on Israel and its troops, and Israeli forces pushing into border towns.

- [Trump gives Iran 48 hours to make deal, search for missing airman continues](#) (2026-04-05 00:25)

WASHINGTON, United States — President Donald Trump said Saturday that Tehran had 48 hours left to cut a deal or face "all Hell", as US and Iranian forces scrambled to find a downed American airman. Trump's latest threat came after a strike near an Iranian nuclear power plant prompted evacuations, and as Tehran announced fresh attacks and the Israeli military said it had detected another missile launch from Yemen. Iran's Revolutionary Guards said they hit a commercial ship in Bahrain, as they maintained their tight grip on the Strait of Hormuz shipping lane and continued to strike economic targets in Gulf neighbors they see as linked to the US-Israeli war effort. The economic strikes are also going the other way. An Israeli or US strike on a petrochemical hub in the southwest of Iran killed five people, according to the deputy governor of Khuzestan province. The war erupted more than a month ago with US-Israeli strikes on Iran, triggering a retaliation that has spread the conflict throughout the Middle East and convulsed the global economy -- particularly due to the closure of the strait, a vital conduit for oil and gas. "Remember when I gave Iran ten days to MAKE A DEAL or OPEN UP THE HORMUZ STRAIT," Trump wrote on Truth Social, referring to an ultimatum issued on March 26. "Time is running out -- 48 hours before all Hell will reign (sic) down on them." Iran's central military command rejected the ultimatum, with General Ali Abdollahi Aliabadi saying Trump's threat was a "helpless, nervous, unbalanced and stupid action". Echoing Trump's language, he warned that "the gates of hell will open for you". Trump later posted a video showing explosions lighting up a night sky along with text that said: "Many of Iran's Military Leaders...are terminated, along with much else, with this massive strike in Tehran", without specifying when it took place. Search for airman Tehran said Friday it had shot down an F-15 warplane and US media reported United States special forces had rescued one of its two crew members, with the other still missing. Iran's military also said it downed a US A-10 ground attack aircraft in the Gulf, with US media saying the pilot of that plane was rescued. The local Mehr news agency on Saturday quoted the deputy governor of Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad province, Fattah Mohammadi, as saying the search for the missing airman involved "popular forces and tribesmen alongside

military forces and is still ongoing".He added that "last night, people fired at enemy helicopters with rifles and did not allow them to land".Images posted on social media and verified by AFPTV showed Iranian police firing at a US helicopter in southwestern Iran as US forces searched for the airman. Bushehr nuclear plant A strike near Iran's Bushehr nuclear plant on Saturday killed a guard and led Russia, which partly constructed the facility and helps operate it, to announce it was evacuating 198 workers and to condemn the strike as "an evil deed".Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi warned that continued attacks on the plant on the southern coast could eventually lead to radioactive fallout that would "end life in GCC (Gulf Cooperation Council) capitals, not Tehran".Bushehr is considerably closer to Kuwait, Bahrain and Qatar than it is to the Iranian capital.Rafael Grossi, head of the International Atomic Energy Agency wrote on X that no increase in radiation levels had been reported at the site, but nonetheless voiced " deep concern" at what he said was the fourth such strike in recent weeks.There were also more strikes on Tehran, where an AFP journalist saw a thick haze of smoke covering the skyline. Economic sites hitStrikes by all sides have increasingly targeted economic and industrial sites, raising fears of wider disruption to global energy supplies.US-Israeli strikes on Saturday hit a petrochemicals hub, a cement plant and a trade terminal on the Iran-Iraq border, where one person was reported killed.Iran has retaliated with missile and drone attacks on Israel and US allies in the Gulf.Shrapnel from intercepted drones injured four people in Bahrain on Saturday, and two buildings in Dubai were hit by debris, including one housing the US cloud computing firm Oracle, authorities said.On another front, the Israeli military said Friday it had struck more than 3,500 targets across Lebanon in the month since the latest round of fighting with Iran-backed Hezbollah began.As night fell Saturday, Israel warned it would strike near a border crossing between Syria and Lebanon, ordering residents to evacuate.In Tel Aviv, hundreds of Israelis marched to protest the war and demand peace talks.

- [Ridge of HPA affecting Central, Northern Luzon](#) (2026-04-04 23:32)

MANILA, Philippines – The ridge or extension of the high-pressure area (HPA) has been extending over areas in Central and Northern Luzon, where there would be less cloud and thunderstorm in the next 24 hours, the state-run weather agency said on Sunday.Meanwhile, Metro Manila and the rest of the country would likely have partly cloudy to cloudy skies with isolated rain showers or thunderstorms due to the localized thunderstorms, weather specialist Veronica Torres said.In its 5 a.m. briefing, the Philippine Atmospheric Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) said it has not monitored any weather disturbance forming inside or outside the country's area of responsibility in the coming days.Generally, most parts of the country would experience hot and humid weather throughout the day except for isolated downpours late in the afternoon or evening, the Pagasa forecaster said.According to Pagasa, a ridge of HPA is an “elongated region of sinking, cool, and dry air that acts as an atmospheric cap, bringing fair, sunny, and hot weather with light winds.” Meanwhile, it said that a localized thunderstorm refers to a “small-scale, short-lived weather system that brings isolated heavy rains, lightning, thunder, and gusty winds usually occurring over a specific, small area.”

- [Iran shoots down two US warplanes](#) (2026-04-04 16:13)

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Iran shot down two US military planes in separate attacks Friday, with one service member rescued and at least one missing, in a dramatic escalation since the war began nearly five weeks ago. It was the first time US aircraft had been downed in the conflict and came just two days after President Donald Trump said in a national address that the US had “beaten and completely decimated Iran” and was “going to finish the job, and we’re going to finish it very fast.” One fighter jet was shot down in Iran, officials said. A US crew member from that plane was rescued, but a second was missing, and a US military search-and-rescue operation was underway. Neither the White House nor the Pentagon released public information about the downed planes. In a brief telephone interview with NBC News, Trump declined to discuss the search-and-rescue efforts but said what happened would not affect negotiations with Iran. “No, not at all. No, it’s war,” he said. Separately, Iranian state media said a US A-10 attack aircraft crashed in the Persian Gulf after being struck by Iranian defense forces. A US official who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss a sensitive military situation said earlier that it was not clear if the aircraft crashed or was shot down or whether Iran was involved. Neither the status of the crew nor exactly where it went down was immediately known. Those incidents came as Iran fired on targets across the Middle East on Friday, keeping the pressure on Israel and its Gulf Arab neighbors despite US and Israeli insistence that Iran’s military capabilities have been all but destroyed. Status unknown Neither the White House nor the Pentagon released public information about the downed planes. But the Pentagon notified the House Armed Services Committee that the status of a second service member from the fighter jet was not known. In an email from the Pentagon that was obtained by The Associated Press, meanwhile, the military said it received notification of “an aircraft being shot down” in the Middle East, without providing more details. Iran’s attacks on Gulf energy infrastructure and its tight grip on the Strait of Hormuz, through which a fifth of the world’s oil and natural gas transits in peacetime, have roiled stock markets, sent oil prices skyrocketing, and threatened to raise the cost of many basic goods, including food. Pressure on the US Before word of the rescue, social media footage showed American drones, aircraft and helicopters flying over the mountainous region where a TV channel affiliated with Iranian state television said earlier that at least one pilot bailed out of the fighter jet. An anchor urged residents to hand over any “enemy pilot” to police and promised a reward. It was the first time the US has lost aircraft in Iranian territory during the conflict and could mark a new level of pressure on the US military. Throughout the war, Iran has made a series of claims about shooting down piloted enemy aircraft that turned out not to be true. Friday was the first time that Iran went on television, urging the public to look for a downed pilot. Iranian state media said in a post on the social platform X that the military shot down a US F-15E Strike Eagle. The aircraft is a variation of the Air Force fighter jet that carries a pilot and a weapons system officer. Alan Diehl, a former investigator for the Air Force Safety Center, said the Strike Eagle has an emergency locator beacon in a survival kit that can be set to activate automatically or manually. Desalination plant, refinery targeted News about the downed planes came after Iran attacked Kuwait’s Mina al-Ahmadi oil refinery. The state-run Kuwait Petroleum Corp. said firefighters were working to

control several blazes. Kuwait also said an Iranian attack caused “material damage” to a desalination plant. Such plants are responsible for most of the drinking water for Gulf states, and they have become a major target in the war. Also, sirens sounded in Bahrain, Saudi Arabia said it destroyed several Iranian drones, and Israel reported incoming missiles. Authorities in the United Arab Emirates shut down a gas field after a missile interception reportedly rained debris on it and started a fire. Activists reported strikes around Tehran and the central city of Isfahan, but it was not immediately clear what was hit. In Lebanon, where Israel has launched a ground invasion in its fight with the pro-Iranian Hezbollah militant group, an Israeli drone strike on worshippers leaving Friday prayers near Beirut killed two people, according to the state-run National News Agency. More than 1,900 people have been killed in Iran since the war began on Feb. 28 with US and Israeli strikes. In a review released Friday, the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data, a US-based group, said it found that civilian casualties were clustered around strikes on security and state-linked sites “rather than indiscriminate bombardment” of urban areas. More than two dozen people have died in Gulf states and the occupied West Bank, 19 have been reported dead in Israel, and 13 US service members have been killed. More than 1,300 people have been killed and more than 1 million displaced in Lebanon. Ten Israeli soldiers have also died there. Hormuz chokehold World leaders, meanwhile, have struggled to end Iran’s stranglehold on the Strait of Hormuz, which has had far-reaching consequences for the global economy and has proved to be its greatest strategic advantage in the war. The UN Security Council was expected to take up the matter on Saturday. Trump has vacillated on America’s role in the strait, alternately threatening Iran if it does not open the strait and telling other nations to “go get your own oil.” On Friday, he said in a post on social media that, “With a little more time, we can easily OPEN THE HORMUZ STRAIT, TAKE THE OIL, & MAKE A FORTUNE.” Spot prices of Brent crude, the international standard, were around \$109, up more than 50 percent since the start of the war, when Iran began restricting traffic through the strait.

- [Strait of Hormuz now Iran’s weapon of mass disruption](#) (2026-04-04 16:12)

WASHINGTON — Recent US intelligence reports warn that Iran is unlikely to open the Strait of Hormuz any time soon because its grip on the world’s most vital oil artery provides the only real leverage it has over the United States, according to three sources familiar with the matter. The finding suggests that Tehran could continue to throttle the strait to keep energy prices high as a means of pressuring US President Donald Trump to find a quick off-ramp to the nearly five-week-long war that remains unpopular with US voters. The reports also provide the latest indication that the war, intended to eradicate Iran’s military strength, may actually increase its regional sway by showing Tehran’s ability to threaten the key waterway. Trump has sought to downplay the difficulty of reopening the Strait of Hormuz, which carries a fifth of the world’s oil trade. On Friday, he appeared to suggest that he could order US forces to reopen the passage. “With a little more time, we can easily OPEN THE HORMUZ STRAIT, TAKE THE OIL, & MAKE A FORTUNE,” he posted on his Truth Social platform. But analysts have long warned that trying to use force against Iran, which controls one side of the strait, could prove costly and

draw the US into a protracted ground war. “In the attempt to try to prevent Iran from developing a weapon of mass destruction, the US handed Iran a weapon of mass disruption,” said Ali Vaez, director of the Iran Project at the International Crisis Group, a conflict-prevention organization. Tehran, Vaez said, understands its ability to drive world energy markets through its chokehold on the strait “is much more potent than even a nuclear weapon.” Trump’s stance on potential US involvement in reopening the strait has shifted. On one hand, he has made ending Iran’s chokehold a ceasefire precondition, but then he called on Gulf oil-dependent countries and NATO allies to take the lead in reopening it. A White House official, who requested anonymity, said Trump is “confident that the strait will be open very soon” and has been clear that Iran would not be allowed to regulate waterway traffic after the war. But the official noted that Trump also has said that other countries “have far more at stake in preventing this outcome” than the US. Iran’s out-gunned Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps has used various tactics to make commercial transit through the waterway too dangerous or uninsurable since Trump and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu launched their war on Feb. 28. From attacking civilian vessels and releasing mines to demanding passage fees, Iran has effectively blocked traffic through the strait, sending world oil prices soaring to multi-year highs and causing fuel shortages in countries reliant on Gulf oil and gas. Rising energy costs risk fueling inflation in the US, posing a political liability for Trump as he faces dismal poll numbers and his Republican Party girds for midterm congressional elections in November. Iran, the recent intelligence reports warn, is unlikely to surrender that leverage any time soon, according to the three sources. They declined to elaborate on which agencies produced the assessments. “It is certainly the case that now that Iran has tasted its power and leverage over the strait, it won’t soon give it up,” said one of the sources. All three requested anonymity to discuss the intelligence reports. Considerable risks Many experts say that a military operation to reopen the waterway involves considerable risks. The waterway separates Iran and Oman. It is 21 miles (33 km) wide at its narrowest point, but the shipping lane is only 2 miles (3 km) wide in both directions, making ships and troops easy targets. Even if US forces seize the southern Iranian coast and islands, the IRGC could attack them and maintain control of the waterway with drones and missiles launched from deep inside Iran, experts say. “All it takes to disrupt traffic and deter vessels from passing through is one or two drones,” said Vaez. Some experts said that even after the war, Iran is unlikely to give up its ability to regulate traffic through the strait because it will need to rebuild, and charging commercial shipping passage fees would be one means of raising reconstruction funds. Tehran “is going to look to maintain the leverage that they have rediscovered by disrupting traffic” through the strait, former CIA Director Bill Burns said in a Foreign Affairs magazine podcast on Thursday. Iran, he said, will look to use its ability to throttle the waterway to win “long-term deterrence and security guarantees” in any peace deal with the US and to gain “some direct material benefits” like charging passage fees to fund its post-war recovery. “That,” he said, “sets up a really difficult negotiation right now.” Successful crossings One French- and another Japanese-owned vessel are among a handful of vessels to have crossed the war-torn Strait of Hormuz, maritime tracking data showed Friday. Both ships made the crossing on Thursday, according to ship tracking company Marine Traffic’s website. The Maltese-flagged Kribi belonging to the French maritime transport

group CMA CGM crossed the waterway to leave the Gulf on Thursday afternoon, Marine Traffic's data showed. By early Friday, it was off Muscat, Oman, still broadcasting the message "owner France" on its transponder system in the field usually used to give the destination. The vessel's navigation data showed it had crossed via an Iranian-approved route through its waters, dubbed the "Tehran Toll Booth" by leading shipping journal Lloyd's List. Southern route In addition, three tankers — including one co-owned by a Japanese company — crossed the Strait of Hormuz on Thursday by taking an alternative, southern route. They hugged close to the shore of Oman's Musandam Peninsula — a first in nearly three weeks, according to Lloyd's List. Before the war, which started more than a month ago, about a fifth of global oil and liquefied natural gas (LNG) passed through the Strait. All three ships signaled they were an "OMANI SHIP" in the message broadcast by their transponder as they crossed the strait. The Sohar LNG, which was empty when crossing, is co-owned by Japanese shipping company Mitsui O.S.K. That makes it the first Japanese vessel to exit the Gulf since the start of the war, according to a company statement quoted by Japanese media. The Hong-Kong-flagged New Vision, which crossed the strait on March 1 right after the war started, is expected in the French port of Le Havre on Saturday evening. Since the conflict started, however, that has dwindled to a trickle as Iran selectively attacks ships and energy facilities throughout the Gulf in retaliation for US and Israeli attacks. A few commercial ships crossing the Strait of Hormuz recently have passed through the Iranian-approved route in the north of the waterway. Down to a trickle Just 221 commodities vessels have crossed the Strait of Hormuz since March 1, some more than once, according to Kpler data up to Friday morning. In peacetime, the same waterway handles around 120 daily transits, according to Lloyd's List. Of the vessels that made the crossing, 60 percent either came from Iran or were heading there. The other countries whose vessels — of origin or destination — made the crossing were in decreasing order: the United Arab Emirates, China, India, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Brazil and Iraq. It was not clear from the data how many had been cleared to make the crossing by Tehran. But it did show that, among the 118 crossings by ships carrying cargo, 37 had left the Gulf carrying crude oil. Most of those oil tankers — 30 of them — came from Iran or sailed under the Iranian flag. And most ships carrying Iranian oil did not specify their destination on their transponder. Of those who did, all but one reported they were heading to China. In the early days of the war, transponder data showed dozens of ships broadcasting messages such as "Chinese crew" or "Chinese owner" in the field usually used for their destination. This appeared to be an attempt by the ships to avoid being targeted by Iran. The closure of the Strait of Hormuz has caused supply difficulties and sharply raised fuel prices in Southeast Asian countries, including the Philippines. Ako Bicol Party-list Rep. Alfredo Garbin urged oil companies to voluntarily extend fuel discounts this Easter Sunday to help alleviate the burden of consumers who are still reeling from high fuel costs. This comes as fuel prices are expected to increase to P120-P150 per liter threshold next week. In a statement on Saturday, Garbin said that oil firms should not wait for the full implementation of the fuel excise tax cuts before acting.

- [Easter Sunday: A day of renewal](#) (2026-04-04 16:11)

EASTER Sunday is a day when Catholics rejoice, as they commemorate the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. Filipino Catholics start the celebration at dawn through the “Salubong,” or the re-enactment of the meeting of Jesus and Mary. Afterwards, the Easter Mass will be celebrated, where the faithful wear white — symbolizing purity and new beginnings. The day also marks the end of fasting and abstinence, allowing families to reconnect as they gather for a meal. In his homily at Baclaran Church, Fr. Rufino Macasaet implored the public to ponder on what they did during the Holy Week; did they go out on vacation or reflect on their worthiness of God’s sacrifice on the cross? “This is a time when we should be celebrating what Jesus did on the cross. Not a time to go out, swim in the river, look for a beach, or party because the Lord is about to come to life,” Macasaet said. Macasaet urged the faithful to reflect on their own lives and ask themselves whether they are worthy of the gift of salvation that God has offered through Jesus’ death and resurrection. “Are we worthy of the gift that God is giving us? Are we worthy of the gift that he is giving us, his life, so that we can be saved from our sins?” he asked. He challenged the faithful to consider how many times they have crucified Christ through their sins and how often they have buried him by turning away from God. He implored them to use this period of mourning and silence to return to Jesus, to rediscover the image of God in themselves and others, and to feel Christ’s presence in their lives. Macasaet said the celebration of Jesus’ resurrection is not just a simple event in the Catholic Church but a time to renew their lives through God’s guidance.

- [Govt urged to remain agile, proactive amid weak peso](#) (2026-04-04 16:10)

THE government should remain agile and proactive as the Philippine peso continues to depreciate amid market turbulence fueled by the prolonged war in the Middle East, an analyst said Friday. Froilan Calilung, who teaches political science at the University of Santo Tomas, said that while the depreciation was driven largely caused by external factors, specifically, higher oil prices and a strong US dollar due to the Middle East crisis, it threatened to drive up inflation through higher import costs. “The movement of the peso isn’t just a number on a screen; it’s something felt by every Filipino family at the grocery store and the gas pump,” Calilung told The Manila Times. “The goal is not to fight the market, but to navigate it. We need to be agile. While we wait for the situation in the Middle East to de-escalate, our focus should be on ensuring that there is enough food and cheap electricity for every Filipino,” he added. Calilung said that the Philippine peso was currently facing a “perfect storm” of external pressures. “While our domestic economy remains resilient, we are being hit by a strong US dollar driven by high interest rates in the States and geopolitical uncertainty,” Calilung said. “We are seeing a ‘risk-off’ sentiment. When there is global instability, investors flock to the safe-haven dollar,” he added. The analyst also said the Philippines was heavily dependent on imported crude oil, leaving the country vulnerable to global price shocks, causing high inflation. “We are not the only ones experiencing this, but because we are import-dependent on crude oil and some basic foods, we really feel the impact of a depreciated peso. When the peso weakens, the price of our imported oil automatically increases,” he said. Calilung said the war in the Middle East complicated the government’s “cushioning” efforts because “it hits

us on two fronts: energy and remittances.” “If the crisis escalates, global oil prices spike. Since we buy oil in dollars, a weak peso means we are paying a ‘double premium’ — higher oil prices multiplied by a more expensive dollar,” Calilung said. “While a higher exchange rate means more pesos for OFW (overseas Filipino workers) families, their purchasing power also decreases due to the high prices here. It’s a zero-sum game,” he added. The analyst then recommended some policy measures, including active intervention from the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP). “We cannot simply ‘fix’ the exchange rate, but we can manage the volatility,” he said. “The BSP should remain active in the foreign exchange market to prevent ‘sharp’ or speculative swings. We don’t want a free fall; we want stability,” Calilung said. “The BSP needs to be careful in adjusting interest rates. If we keep rates too low, the peso weakens further. If too high, it might hurt our local businesses and MSMEs,” he added. Calilung also said the government should reduce imports and implement targeted subsidies for vulnerable groups. “We must strengthen local agriculture and stimulate renewable energy projects so that we are not too ‘vulnerable’ to regional conflicts,” Calilung said. “Instead of broad programs, focus the budget on the most vulnerable sectors — our farmers, fisherfolk, and PUV drivers — to ensure they can survive the transition,” he added. Malacañang earlier said the ongoing war in the Middle East has contributed to the Philippine peso’s decline to a record low. “This is really one of its effects, and the weakening of the peso against the dollar is also due to the geopolitical tensions happening in the Middle East,” Castro said in a Palace briefing on Tuesday. The Palace official also said that the new development was concerning, but offered the assurance that the president and this administration were keen on doing everything possible to manage the situation. Automatic relief Bagong Henerasyon Party-list Rep. Robert Nazal is pushing for an automatic relief system similar to the Covid pandemic-era Bayanihan laws that would be activated upon the declaration of a national energy emergency to protect Filipino families, workers and key sectors. Under his House Bill 8821 or the “National Energy Emergency Relief and Protection Act,” a standing legal framework would be created for ready-to-roll assistance, eliminating the need to craft emergency measures from scratch during every crisis. Nazal noted that the country is already feeling the impact of volatile fuel prices due to the war in the Middle East, underscoring the need for automatic relief once a national energy emergency is declared. “The Philippines is confronting an energy shock with immediate consequences for transport costs, food distribution, business operations, and household welfare,” Nazal said in his explanatory note. The bill complements existing executive actions by providing a permanent statutory backbone for crisis response. “This bill does not duplicate that executive action. It provides what only legislation can firmly establish: a standing statutory framework for automatic relief, market stabilization, logistics continuity, labor protection, and targeted public support during any declared national energy emergency,” he added. He stressed that fuel shocks do not stop at the pump but also spill into fares, food, electricity, logistics, and the cost of keeping businesses open. Nazal’s measure provides a comprehensive package of financial assistance, livelihood support, and cost-of-living protections for vulnerable households and workers. It also proposes a P100-billion Energy Emergency Relief Fund and creates a multi-agency council to oversee implementation and ensure accountability. Qualified low-income families under the bill will also receive emergency cash aid equivalent to at least

two weeks of the regional minimum wage, along with targeted cash transfers and food support. Displaced workers will be entitled to assistance equivalent to at least one month of the regional minimum wage, plus access to emergency employment, retraining and livelihood programs. CATHERINE VALENTE, RED MENDOZA, AND FRANCO JOSE BAROÑA

- [Artemis II's moonbound astronauts capture Earth's blue beauty](#) (2026-04-04 16:09)

CAPE CANAVERAL, Florida — The Artemis II astronauts have captured our blue planet's brilliant beauty as they zoom ever closer to the moon. NASA released the crew's first downlinked images Friday, 1 1/2 days into the first astronaut moonshot in more than half a century. The first photo taken by Commander Reid Wiseman shows a curved slice of Earth in one of the capsule's windows. The second shows the entire globe with the oceans topped by swirling white tendrils of clouds. A green aurora even glows, according to NASA. "It's great to think that with the exception of our four friends, all of us are represented in this image," said NASA's Lakiesha Hawkins, an exploration systems leader. She added the mission was going well. As of late Friday afternoon, Wiseman and his crew were more than 110,000 miles (180,000 kilometers) from Earth and were quickly gaining on the moon with another 150,000 miles (240,000 kilometers) to go. They should reach their destination on Monday. The three Americans and one Canadian will swing around the moon in their Orion capsule, hang a U-turn, and then head straight back home without stopping. They fired Orion's main engine Thursday night that set them on their course. After Mission Control shifted the position of their capsule, the entire Earth, complete with northern lights, filled their windows. "It was the most spectacular moment, and it paused all four of us in our tracks," Wiseman said in a TV interview. They're the first lunar travelers since Apollo 17 in 1972. Tests and bugs Since launching 26 hours earlier from Florida, the astronauts spent their first day in space testing cameras, steering their Orion spacecraft, and dealing with small toilet and email issues that were later fixed. They had been in a highly elliptical Earth orbit, swinging them as far as 43,000 miles (64,000 km) away on one end and about 100 miles close on the other, from where the key thruster firing to the moon began, known as the translunar injection burn. The maneuver, which began at 7:49 p.m. ET (2349 GMT), is an orbital exit ramp slinging them out of Earth's orbit and onto a figure-eight-shaped trajectory toward the moon. It's the final major thruster firing of the mission, leaving the Orion capsule largely under the influence of orbital mechanics for the remainder of the mission. Wiseman, testing cameras as the crew flew roughly 40,000 miles away from Earth earlier on Thursday, saw the planet as a shrinking sunlit globe, and said taking photos from that distance made it difficult to adjust exposure settings. "It's like walking out back at your house, trying to take a picture of the moon. That's what it feels like right now, trying to take a picture of Earth," he told mission control in Houston as he snapped photos of his home planet with an iPhone. Wiseman earlier faced a minor tech issue when his initial attempts to use Microsoft Outlook to check emails failed, but that was fixed quickly with help from mission control. The four astronauts of NASA's Artemis II mission, which launched from Florida on Wednesday, have a few different devices on board to take photos of space from inside their Orion capsule throughout the flight. They include a small GoPro action camera and iPhones, as well as

professional Nikon cameras that have been used by NASA astronauts on the International Space Station for years. The decision to equip the crew with iPhones was made under NASA Administrator Jared Isaacman, a billionaire astronaut who flew on two private SpaceX Dragon missions and used the devices during his own flights, NASA officials have said.

- [Vida Declares Philippines POGO-Free After Crackdown](#) (2026-04-04 16:08)

THE Department of Justice (DOJ) said no Philippine offshore gaming operator (POGO) hubs are operating in the country, reaffirming a government directive for a total ban on all POGO operations. Justice Secretary Frederick Vida told reporters that the strengthened crackdown on POGOs led to the closure of 80 percent of operational hubs within just one month of the official deadline. “There are no official POGOs left. Definitely, there are no illegal POGOs either. That is the policy of the government — no POGO operations in the Philippines,” Vida said. The DOJ emphasized, however, that monitoring for illegal POGO activity continues, signaling that while official operations have ceased, authorities remain vigilant against potential unauthorized activities. The closure is part of a broader government policy aimed at safeguarding communities, reducing avenues for transnational and nontraditional crimes, and addressing security and economic concerns linked to the POGO industry. Vida said the government’s enforcement measures have ensured compliance, and the remaining areas previously hosting POGO operations have been cleared, effectively ending the legal operation of such hubs nationwide. Authorities also maintain they will act on any reports of illegal POGO activity, reinforcing the Philippines’ zero-tolerance stance.

- [PH to maintain Myanmar ties after election](#) (2026-04-04 16:07)

THE Philippines will continue its engagements with Myanmar following the election of military leader Min Aung Hlaing as president, Malacañang said. Palace Press Officer Claire Castro said the government has taken note of the recent political developments in Myanmar, particularly the election of Min Aung. “The Philippines will continue to engage relevant authorities and stakeholders in Myanmar through Foreign Affairs Secretary Ma. Theresa Lazaro, in her capacity as special envoy of the Asean (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) chair to Myanmar, as well as through our respective embassies,” Castro said in a statement. In November 2025, President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. appointed Lazaro as the Philippines’ special envoy of the Asean chair to Myanmar, as part of the country’s role in supporting regional efforts to address the crisis in Myanmar. The Palace official reiterated the country’s commitment to Asean-led efforts to address the situation in Myanmar. Castro also called for “renewed momentum” in achieving the cessation of violence in Myanmar. “The Philippines remains committed to support Asean’s collective efforts and encourages renewed momentum toward the full and effective implementation of the Five-Point Consensus, particularly in achieving the cessation of violence and facilitating the delivery of humanitarian assistance to the people of Myanmar,” she said. Min Aung, who has led Myanmar’s military government since the February 2021 coup, was elected president by a military-dominated parliament, consolidating his hold on power amid ongoing political turmoil. Min Aung had landed the position through a huge margin

of 429 votes against retired Gen. Nyo Saw' s 126. The 2021 coup ousted the civilian government led by Aung San Suu Kyi and triggered widespread protests, armed resistance and international condemnation, plunging the country into prolonged instability.

- [TESDA Launches Juana Creatives Co-Working Hub for Filipino Creatives](#) (2026-04-04 16:06)

THE Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (Tesda) launched “Juana Creatives” March 30, a co-working hub for women and aspiring creatives. The project aims to develop skills and provide enterprise support through artificial intelligence. Tesda Secretary Jose Francisco Benitez said the initiative expands technical vocational education and training into the creative and cultural industries while making learning more accessible for Filipinos who want to explore creative skills outside traditional work hours.” This initiative helps future-proof creative livelihoods by focusing on skills that remain distinctly human — craft, design, storytelling and cultural expression — even as artificial intelligence reshapes industries,” Benitez said. Juana Creatives offers an inclusive environment for freelancers, hobbyists, cultural practitioners and creative entrepreneurs by providing short, industry-led courses and workshops across a wide range of creative disciplines. Schedules are flexible, including evenings and weekends, to accommodate working professionals and aspiring entrepreneurs. Among the programs offered are pottery and ceramics with Studio Roman; scent making with Fragrance Factory; leather craft with Everything Green; pattern making and fashion with Slims; gemstone and jewelry making with Lapidary; photography and videography with the Philippine Center for Creative Imaging; film production with the Film Academy of the Philippines Guilds; digital embroidery with Norde; and animation with the Tesda Human Resource and Development Center and the Animation Council of the Philippines. The hub aims to support the development of creative competencies that are less susceptible to automation, ensuring that learners remain competitive and adaptable in an artificial intelligence-driven economy by focusing on hands-on, craft-based and culturally rooted disciplines. Tesda emphasized that while the hub was launched in conjunction with the agency' s Women' s Month celebrations, the facility is open to trainees of all genders.

- [PIDS Study: High-Cost Patients Account for 20% of PhilHealth Payouts](#) (2026-04-04 16:05)

RESEARCH shows that chronic illnesses, such as cancer and cardiovascular diseases, make up the majority of hospital spending. In a recent study, the Philippine Institute for Development Studies analyzed 5.8 million inpatient claims from 2023 submitted to the Philippine Health Insurance Corp. (PhilHealth). The analysis revealed that approximately 250,000 high-cost patients generated about P14 billion in reimbursements — or about one-fifth of PhilHealth' s inpatient payouts. The authors noted that a relatively small group of patients, often those with complex or chronic conditions, accounts for a disproportionate share of health care spending.” A small subset of patients, often those with complex or chronic conditions, consumes a disproportionate share of resources, potentially crowding out coverage for the broader population' s needs if not managed effectively,” the authors said. Beyond highlighting the concentration of health care costs, the study sheds light on the efficiency of the country' s health financing system.” The analysis provides evidence on how hospital resources are used

and how payment systems can be improved to better respond to patient needs,” the authors noted. The study found that the majority of high-cost cases involve the elderly. Researchers noted that as the population ages and the prevalence of noncommunicable diseases rises, the need for preventive health care, early intervention and targeted reforms will be critical to ensuring the Philippine health care system can meet the needs of all citizens. The study further emphasized the need for targeted payment reforms to improve cost control and reduce catastrophic health spending for Filipinos. Researchers proposed reforms to better align payment systems with patient needs and ensure health care resources are used effectively. This includes addressing the disproportionate allocation of resources to high-cost users while maintaining equitable access for the broader population.

- [DOTr to investigate NAIA ceiling collapse](#) (2026-04-04 16:03)

THE Department of Transportation (DOTr) has assured a Senate panel that a thorough investigation is under way into the reported ceiling collapse at the arrival extension area of the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA) Terminal 1 that left seven individuals injured. Transportation Secretary Giovanni Lopez assured Sen. Raffy Tulfo, chairman of the Senate Committee on Public Services, who raised concerns about the incident and immediately sought updates on the victims' condition. According to Lopez, the Emergency Response Team of the New NAIA Infrastructure Corp. (NNIC), the private operator managing the airport, promptly responded to the situation and provided immediate assistance to those affected. The seven injured individuals, initially identified as well-wishers at the arrival area, were quickly attended to and brought to medical facilities. Lopez said NNIC has committed to shoulder all medical expenses of the victims. Initial reports indicated that one of the victims was injured on the forehead and requested transfer to the Makati Medical Center. The remaining six were reported to be in stable condition. Authorities are still awaiting a comprehensive medical update on all those involved. Tulfo underscored the need for swift and effective emergency response measures, emphasizing that incidents in major transport hubs must be handled with urgency to ensure public safety and proper care for victims. While operations at NAIA Terminal 1 have since normalized, the senator called on the DOTr and the Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippines to strengthen enforcement of safety standards and conduct regular inspections across airport facilities nationwide. The DOTr said the ongoing investigation will determine the cause of the ceiling collapse, including possible structural or maintenance lapses, and identify any parties that may be held accountable. Lopez vowed to submit a full report and provide updates to the Senate once findings and recommendations are finalized, as authorities work to prevent similar incidents in the country's main international gateway.

- [Nearly 600 OFWs return home from Bahrain, UAE](#) (2026-04-04 16:02)

CLOSE to 600 overseas Filipino workers and their dependents returned home from Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA) said on Friday. The 244 OFWs and their dependents returned home from the Gulf state via Dammam, Saudi Arabia, through Gulf Air Flight GF 154, which touched down at the Ninoy Aquino

International Airport Terminal 3 on Friday morning. They were assisted by the Department of Migrant Workers (DMW), OWWA, the Department of Social Welfare and Development, and the medical team of the Manila International Airport Authority. The repatriates received food and services, including transportation, temporary accommodations and other assistance, such as domestic flight arrangements and hotel accommodations for those going home to Visayas and Mindanao, and land transportation assistance for those in other parts of Luzon outside Metro Manila. Also included are training and upskilling packages for their social reintegration, as well as livelihood assistance and special financial aid for OFWs affected by the war in the Middle East. Meanwhile, Migrant Workers Secretary Hans Leo Cacdac posted on his Facebook that he was on a flight with 344 Filipinos from Dubai, UAE. Aboard the government-chartered flight were 228 OFWs with their 68 relatives and 48 stranded Filipinos, who landed at the Villamor Airbase around 4 p.m. Cacdac said this is the seventh batch of OFWs who have returned home through the government's chartered flights. Overall, 588 Filipinos returned to the country from the Middle Eastern countries on Friday. Also, on Thursday, 193 Filipinos arrived in the country from Kuwait, according to the DMW and OWWA. OWWA said in a statement that the government's repatriation efforts under President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. will continue throughout the Holy Week, amid the ongoing war in the Middle East.

- [Pasig's 5 new e-buses to run starting Monday](#) (2026-04-04 16:02)

PASIG City's five newly acquired electric minibuses will begin serving commuters on Monday, April 6, under the city government's *Libreng Sakay* (free ride) program. Mayor Vico Sotto earlier said the new electric minibuses arrived as oil prices continued to rise, with each unit procured for P3,989,600. Sotto said the vehicles would be used by Pasig Transport for *Libreng Sakay* and would be pilot-tested on underserved and potential PUV routes to improve public transportation efficiency in the city. "We will pilot test underserved and potential PUV routes to improve the efficiency of public transport in the city," Sotto said. He said the goal was to determine whether the routes are feasible and whether there is enough passenger demand. The city government said four routes will initially be operational from Monday to Friday except holidays, with SPED on Caruncho Avenue serving as the common jump-off point. These routes will connect SPED to the Temporary Pasig City Hall, Ligaya in Santolan, One San Miguel Avenue in San Antonio, and Nagpayong in Pinagbuhatan. Route 1 will operate as a point-to-point service between SPED and the Temporary Pasig City Hall. Routes 2, 3 and 4 will have designated pick-up and drop-off points along their routes, and details will be released in a separate post. Pasig said the vehicles assigned to Routes 2, 3 and 4 would run only during rush hours, from 5:30 a.m. to 9 a.m. and from 3 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. The city said the limited operating schedule aims to avoid affecting PUVs that continue to operate, despite the continued rise in oil prices, while still helping commuters who may struggle to find rides.

- [Pasay roads to be closed Sunday for running event](#) (2026-04-04 16:01)

SEVERAL roads in Pasay City will be temporarily closed from 2 a.m. to 7 a.m. on Sunday for the Hades Olympus Run 2026, according to the Pasay Traffic and Parking Management Office. It said

the closures will ensure participants' safety and allow the event to proceed smoothly. Affected roads include SM MOA Block 16, Seaside Avenue, Diokno Avenue (with a zipper lane at the impounding area), Buendia Extension (with a zipper lane), Jalandoni Street northbound, Sotto Street (with a zipper lane at the PICC and Star City side), Roxas Boulevard from Quirino Avenue to Parañaque City, and Atang dela Rama (with a zipper lane at the PICC side). Jalandoni Street northbound will be closed to traffic during the advisory period. Motorists were advised to plan their trips and take alternative routes to avoid inconvenience.

- [Cardinal urged Catholics to love the poor this Easter](#) (2026-04-04 14:34)

MANILA, Philippines— A Cardinal urged the faithful to love the poor and the needy, stressing that they must not only commemorate Jesus Christ's sacrifice but also live out His teachings. In his homily at the Manila Cathedral's Easter Vigil on Saturday, Cardinal Orlano Quevedo urged the faithful to reflect on their own lives and consider how they can contribute to alleviating the suffering of others. "Today we should have that love for one another, and especially the love of the poor and the needy. The special spirit of Christian love. The love of the poor and the needy is already demonstrated by Jesus. The God born poor, the God who lived poor, and the God in his humanity died poor," he said. Quevedo emphasized that the celebration of Jesus' resurrection is about embodying God's love in daily life—especially toward society's most vulnerable sectors." "Love one another as I have loved you," said Jesus. After the washing of the feet, love one another. Serve one another. And not only love and serve within your family and your friends, your community, but especially the poor and the needy," he said. The cardinal described the Easter Vigil as a movement from darkness to light—symbolizing humanity's liberation from sin and suffering through Christ's resurrection. He pointed out that present-day struggles—such as rising prices on goods and corruption—are forms of "darkness" that continue to afflict many, particularly the marginalized. "Hunger stalks the land because of high prices that the needy and poor people can hardly afford," he said. Despite these challenges, Quevedo underscored that Easter is a celebration of joy and hope, urging the faithful to spread the love of God not only to their families and friends but more importantly to the poor.

- [Christ resurrection 'Good News the world needs' —Advincula](#) (2026-04-04 13:37)

MANILA, Philippines— Manila Archbishop Jose Cardinal Advincula emphasized that the resurrection of Jesus Christ on Easter Sunday is the "good news the world desperately needs." In his Easter message on Saturday, Advincula described Christ's resurrection as the "most revolutionary message of Christianity," underscoring how His rising from the dead brings light to the faithful in moments of darkness. "The Resurrection of Jesus is the most subversive and revolutionary message of Christianity. It is a call to resistance—to push back against the forces that ruthlessly seek to bury our joy and our future," Advincula said. Echoing the call of Pope Leo XIV to end the conflict in the Middle East, Advincula said that as the war continues to affect the world—physically, mentally, and economically—Easter serves as a "nonviolent battle against hatred and hostility." "Easter is a summons to all peoples to reject

the ‘globalization of indifference’ and the normalization of genocide. Together with our Holy Father, Pope Leo XIV, I call for an end to this senseless war that has brought nothing but suffering and destruction. With my brother bishops, I appeal for accountability, for the relentless pursuit of justice in public governance, and for more urgent action to alleviate the agony of our people,” he said. Advincula also urged the faithful to live out the meaning of Easter through renewal and vigilance. “An authentic celebration of Easter calls us to rise to a new life, with renewed fervor to remain awake and vigilant. Let us not waste the sacrifice and offering of Jesus on the cross. Let us not fail to recognize the liberating presence of the Risen Christ in our midst. May our celebration of this Easter Season be an opportune time for all of us to roll away the stones that have long oppressed us and to welcome the new day of hope that the Lord has created for us,” he added.

- [Lawmaker to oil companies: Extend fuel discounts this Easter](#) (2026-04-04 13:23)

MANILA, Philippines - Ako Bicol Party-list Rep. Alfredo Garbin Jr. has urged oil companies to voluntarily extend fuel discounts this Easter Sunday to help ease the burden on consumers still reeling from high fuel costs. This comes as fuel prices are expected to rise to the ₱120–₱150 per liter range next week. In a statement on Saturday, Garbin said oil firms should not wait for the full implementation of fuel excise tax cuts before taking action. “While we are celebrating Easter—a time of hope and new beginnings—oil companies should take the initiative to offer meaningful discounts to ease the burden on our countrymen,” Garbin said. He added that elevated gasoline prices continue to affect not only motorists but also the broader economy, noting that some motorists have already reduced their trips, impacting the entire supply chain—from transportation to food prices. Garbin said voluntary discounts would provide immediate and meaningful relief, particularly to vulnerable sectors. The Bicol lawmaker also urged oil companies to work closely with the Department of Energy to ensure the timely and orderly rollout of measures that could help bring down fuel prices, including tax adjustments.

- [Aussie passenger loses P7K in NAIA 3](#) (2026-04-04 13:02)

The Office for Transportation Security (OTS) late on Friday said that a passenger from Australia bound for Cebu reported to authorities that cash amounting to P7,000 went missing at Terminal 3 of the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA). In a statement, the OTS said the passenger was bound for Cebu via Cebu Pacific Flight 5J 565. The agency said they took action to validate the information and also initiating a fact-finding investigation. Also, the OTS said they were coordinating with the New NAIA Infra Corp. and the Philippine National Police Aviation Security Group in looking for the suspect. “We do not tolerate such acts within our organization. Any violation of trust or misconduct will be thoroughly investigated, and those found responsible,” OTS Administrator Gilberto Cruz said in a statement. The OTS said the personnel involved was fired, while the fact-finding investigation is ongoing.

- [Pasay roads closed for running event on Sunday, motorists advised to take alternate routes](#) (2026-04-04 03:36)

MANILA, Philippines — Several roads in Pasay City will be closed from 2 a.m. to 7 a.m. on Sunday for a running event, according to the Pasay Traffic and Parking Management Office. The office said the closures were meant to ensure the safety of participants and allow the smooth conduct of the Hades Olympus Run 2026. Affected roads are SM MOA Block 16, Seaside Avenue, Diokno Avenue with a zipper lane at the impounding area, Buendia Extension with a zipper lane, Jalandoni Street northbound, Sotto Street with a zipper lane at the PICC and Star City side, Roxas Boulevard from Quirino Avenue to Parañaque City, and Atang dela Rama with a zipper lane at the PICC side. Jalandoni Street northbound will be closed to traffic during the advisory period. Motorists are advised to plan their trips ahead and take alternative routes to avoid inconvenience.

- [TESDA launches creative co-working hub for women, aspiring creatives](#) (2026-04-04 03:23)

MANILA, Philippines — A co-working hub for women and aspiring creatives that would develop their skills and provide enterprise support and creative collaboration as well as equipping them with Artificial Intelligence-resilient skills have been launched by the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority. Called as the "Juana Creatives" hub, it was launched by TESDA Secretary Kiko Benitez on March 30, 2026. In his speech, Benitez said that the initiative expanded technical vocational education and training (TVET) into the creative and cultural industries while making learning more accessible for Filipinos who wanted to explore creative skills outside traditional work hours. "[T]his initiative helps future-proof creative livelihoods by focusing on skills that remain distinctly human—craft, design, storytelling, and cultural expression—even as artificial intelligence reshapes industries," Benitez added. Juana Creatives aims to provide an inclusive environment for freelancers, hobbyists, cultural practitioners, and creative entrepreneurs by offering short, industry-led courses and workshops across a wide range of creative disciplines, with flexible schedules that include evenings and weekends to accommodate working professionals. Among the programs that the participants can learn include pottery and ceramics with Studio Roman, scent making with Fragrance Factory, leather craft with Everything Green, pattern making and fashion with SLIMS, gemstone and jewelry making with Lapidary, photography and videography with the Philippine Center for Creative Imaging, film production with the Film Academy of the Philippines Guilds, digital embroidery with Norde, and animation with TESDA HRDC (Human Resource and Development Center) and the Animation Council of the Philippines. The hub aims to support the development of creative competencies that are less susceptible to automation, ensuring that learners remain competitive and adaptable in an AI-driven economy through focusing on hands-on, craft-based, and culturally rooted disciplines. TESDA stressed that while the hub was launched in time for Women's Month, it was open to trainees regardless of gender.

- [Bayanihan-style energy relief package pushed at House](#) (2026-04-04 03:14)

MANILA, Philippines — Bagong Henerasyon Partylist Rep. Robert Nazal is pushing for an automatic relief system similar to the Covid pandemic-era Bayanihan laws that would be activated upon the declaration of a national energy emergency to protect Filipino families,

workers, and key sectors. Under his House Bill 8821 or the “National Energy Emergency Relief and Protection Act,” a standing legal framework would be created for ready-to-roll assistance, eliminating the need to craft emergency measures from scratch during every crisis. Nazal said the country was already feeling the impact of volatile fuel prices due to the war in the Middle East, underscoring the need for automatic relief once a national energy emergency is declared. “The Philippines is confronting an energy shock with immediate consequences for transport costs, food distribution, business operations, and household welfare,” Nazal said in his explanatory note. The bill complements existing executive actions by providing a permanent statutory backbone for crisis response. “This bill does not duplicate that executive action. It provides what only legislation can firmly establish: a standing statutory framework for automatic relief, market stabilization, logistics continuity, labor protection, and targeted public support during any declared national energy emergency,” he added. Nazal’s measure provides a comprehensive package of financial assistance, livelihood support, and cost-of-living protections for vulnerable households and workers. It also proposes a P100-billion Energy Emergency Relief Fund and creates a multi-agency council to oversee implementation and ensure accountability. Qualified low-income families under the bill will also receive emergency cash aid equivalent to at least two weeks of the regional minimum wage, along with targeted cash transfers and food support. Displaced workers will be entitled to assistance equivalent to at least one month of the regional minimum wage, plus access to emergency employment, retraining, and livelihood programs.

- [Pasig’ s 5 new e-buses to begin serving commuters Monday](#) (2026-04-04 03:07)

MANILA, Philippines — Pasig City’ s five newly acquired electric minibuses will begin serving commuters on Monday under the city government’ s *Libreng Sakay* (free ride) program. Mayor Vico Sotto said the new electric minibuses arrived as oil prices continued to rise, with each unit procured for P3,989,600. Sotto said the vehicles would be used by Pasig Transport for *Libreng Sakay* and would be pilot-tested on underserved and potential PUV routes to help improve the efficiency of public transportation in the city. “We will pilot test underserved and potential PUV routes to improve the efficiency of public transport in the city,” Sotto said. He said the goal was to determine whether the routes were feasible and whether there was enough passenger demand. The city government said four routes would initially be operational from Monday to Friday, except on holidays, with SPED on Caruncho Avenue serving as the common jump-off point. These routes will connect SPED to the Temporary Pasig City Hall, Ligaya in Santolan, One San Miguel Avenue in San Antonio, and Nagpayong in Pinagbuhatan. Route 1 will operate as a point-to-point service between SPED and the Temporary Pasig City Hall. Routes 2, 3 and 4 will have designated pick-up and drop-off points along their routes, with the city saying details would be released in a separate post. Pasig said the vehicles assigned to Routes 2, 3 and 4 would run only during rush hours, from 5:30 a.m. to 9 a.m. and from 3 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. The city said the limited operating schedule was meant to avoid affecting PUVs that continue to operate despite the continued rise in oil prices, while still helping commuters who may struggle to find rides. Aside from the five electric minibuses, the city said a total of 12 vehicles were ready for

deployment, including one diesel bus and six e-tricycles. All routes will operate on a round-trip basis, with more vehicles expected to be added in the coming days.

- [PH to continue engagements with Myanmar after electing military leader as president](#) (2026-04-04 03:03)

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippines will continue its engagements with Myanmar following the election of military leader Min Aung Hlaing as president, Malacañang said. "The Philippines will continue to engage relevant authorities and stakeholders in Myanmar through Foreign Affairs Secretary Ma. Theresa Lazaro, in her capacity as Special Envoy of the Asean (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) Chair[man] to Myanmar, as well as through our respective embassies," Palace Press Officer Claire Castro said in a statement. The Palace official also reiterated the country's commitment to Asean-led efforts to address the situation in that country. "The Philippines remains committed to support Asean's collective efforts and encourages renewed momentum toward the full and effective implementation of the Five Point Consensus, particularly in achieving the cessation of violence and facilitating the delivery of humanitarian assistance to the people of Myanmar," she said.

- [Oil surge beyond \\$150/barrel feared](#) (2026-04-03 16:10)

HAVING once more soared beyond \$110 per barrel on Thursday, could oil prices reach new records beyond \$150 as some analysts believe? President Donald Trump's latest belligerent tone over the Middle East war has reignited concerns about persistently high crude costs and the limited measures available to tackle the fallout. Since the start of the US-Israeli conflict with Iran on Feb. 28, benchmark oil prices have soared more than 50 percent largely owing to the Strait of Hormuz — through which normally one-fifth of the world's crude passes — shutting to most tankers. French bank Societe Generale said \$150 is a "credible" outcome on a prolonged war, while most analysts estimate crude hitting \$130-\$140. Australian bank Macquarie forecast \$200 crude should the war still occur in June. And this does not take into account closure of the Strait of Hormuz combined with an attack on Kharg Island — through which the bulk of Iran's crude production travels — or disruption to another key trading route, the Strait of Bab el-Mandeb. International benchmark Brent North Sea crude and the main US contract, West Texas Intermediate, each soared to record highs above \$147 in the wake of the 2008 global financial crisis before collapsing during the Covid pandemic. At around \$110, consumers are already facing heavy financial pain, as prices of gasoline and diesel soar around the world. In an unprecedented decision in response to the Mideast war, the 32 nations belonging to the International Energy Agency (IEA) pledged to unlock 426 million barrels, equivalent to more than one-third of their combined reserves. The United States, itself a major oil producer, is to release 172 million barrels, or 40 percent of its strategic reserves. These emergency releases "are not sufficient," UBS commodities analyst Giovanni Staunovo told Agence France-Presse (AFP), noting that the maximum pace of release is around 3 million barrels per day (mpd) compared with 15 mpd failing to reach the market because of the war. The conflict has already triggered a crisis more severe than the oil shocks of the 1970s and

the one that followed Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022, IEA head Fatih Birol said on a podcast published on Wednesday, adding that "April will be much worse than March." The agency has identified about 40 key energy infrastructures damaged since the start of the Mideast war, which will each take time to repair. For countries dependent on oil and gas transiting through the Strait of Hormuz — in particular those spread across Asia and Europe — the situation appeared bleak. Three-quarters of the world's population lives in countries dependent on fossil fuels, according to energy think tank Ember. Governments have less budgetary leeway to help businesses and households, with public debt potentially reaching 100 percent of gross domestic product by 2029, a high since the end of the Second World War, according to recent projections by the International Monetary Fund. Meanwhile, among political leaders and economic groups, many want the phasing out of fossil fuels to be accelerated. A recent University of Oxford study claimed that a fully decarbonized energy system in the United Kingdom would save an average household 441 pounds (\$509) in annual bills compared with up to 82 pounds if all North Sea oil and gas wells were exploited. In the short term, calls for energy-use moderation are multiplying, such as the European Commission's request to member states to reduce their oil demand, or Bangladesh's call for its civil servants to turn off lights and lower air-conditioning. Several countries, including Malaysia and Sri Lanka, are encouraging people to work from home if they are able to do so. "The reality is, the economic shocks caused by this war will be with us for months," Australia's Prime Minister Anthony Albanese warned on Wednesday. In the Philippines, diesel and gasoline prices are expected to spike again next week, as the war in the Middle East drags on. A source in the local oil industry said diesel prices will increase by around P17 to P19 per liter, and gasoline by P3 to P5 per liter. The estimates are based on the four-day trading of Mean of Platts Singapore, the pricing basis of refined goods in Southeast Asia. The source said recent talks by the Philippine government with Iran to allow Philippine-bound oil shipments safe passage through the Strait of Hormuz could help bring fuel prices down. "Any serious talks with Iran could de-escalate the tensions and bring some relief to prices. However, until the Strait of Hormuz is reopened, supply will continue to remain tight and prices supported," the source said. This week, diesel rose by P4.50 to P12.90 per liter, and gasoline by as much as P2.90 per liter. As of Maundy Thursday, 375 out of 14,519 gas stations in Metro Manila closed down after delivery of petroleum products was suspended because of the Holy Week break. On Friday, the Philippine National Police (PNP) said it will continue to be vigilant against profiteering and hoarding of oil products. Nine profiteering and hoarding cases have so far been filed by the PNP against fuel dealers. "Amid strict monitoring of [overall security] situation this Holy Week, we continue to coordinate with the DOE (Department of Energy), Municipal Price Coordinating Council and other agencies to ensure the smooth supply [of petroleum products] and avoid any interruptions with the public," PNP chief Gen. Jose Melencio Nartatez Jr. said in a statement. He reminded business owners to "comply with the law and not to hoard or overprice fuel. Breaking the law has a punishment." Nartatez also appealed to the public to report any illegal or unethical practices related to fuel supply and pricing. Also on Friday, Malacañang dismissed as "fake news" claims that there would be an energy lockdown starting April 20. Palace Press Officer Claire Castro issued the statement in response to a social media post about an energy

lockdown. “Fake news. Please spread, this is fake news,” Castro said in a Viber message. The advisory, which even bears the logo of the DOE, urged the public to prepare power banks, solar equipment, candles, lamps, food and other essentials in anticipation of the energy lockdown.

- [US vows to target more Iranian infrastructure](#) (2026-04-03 16:09)

PRESIDENT Donald Trump said the United States “hasn’t even started destroying what’s left in Iran,” reiterating vows to increase the ferocity of attacks on its infrastructure, as dozens of countries sought ways to restart vital energy shipments through the Strait of Hormuz. Nearly five weeks after it started with a joint US-Israeli aerial assault, the war in Iran continues to spread chaos across the region and roil financial markets, raising the pressure on Trump to find a quick resolution to the conflict. Trump has stepped up his rhetoric in recent days as negotiations conducted via intermediaries with new leaders in Iran show limited signs of progress and pessimism at home about the war grows. The US military “hasn’t even started destroying what’s left in Iran. Bridges next, then Electric Power Plants,” Trump wrote on social media late on Thursday, adding that Iran’s leadership “knows what has to be done, and has to be done, FAST!” He earlier posted video of the US bombing a newly constructed bridge between Tehran and nearby Karaj. The B1 Bridge was scheduled to open to traffic this year. According to Iran’s state media, eight people were killed and 95 others were wounded in the US attack. “Striking civilian structures, including unfinished bridges, will not compel Iranians to surrender,” Iran Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi said in a statement. Satellite images also showed smoke rising from the port in Qeshm, an Iranian island strategically located in the Strait of Hormuz, earlier this week. Still, Iran and its allies have continued to strike targets around the Gulf. Kuwait Petroleum Corp. said its Mina al-Ahmadi refinery was hit by drones, setting off fires at operating units, but no injuries were reported, according to the state news agency. Saudi Arabia’s defense ministry said on Friday its air defenses intercepted seven drones in recent hours, according to its state news agency. And a spokesman for Iran’s Khatam al-Anbiya Central Headquarters said on Friday a second US F-35 fighter jet was shot down over central Iran by Revolutionary Guard air defenses, with low chances of pilot survival. There was no immediate comment from the US. Last month, the US military said in a statement that a US F-35 aircraft conducted an emergency landing after flying a combat mission over Iran. The military said the pilot was in stable condition. Over 100 American international law experts said on Thursday the conduct of US forces and statements by senior US officials “raise serious concerns about violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law, including potential war crimes.” A letter signed by the experts particularly noted a mid-March comment from Trump where he said the US may conduct strikes on Iran “just for fun.” It also cited comments from Pentagon chief Pete Hegseth from early March in which he said the US does not fight with “stupid rules of engagement.” In a speech on Wednesday night, Trump repeated his threats against Iran’s civilian power plants and gave no clear timeline for ending hostilities. That drew vows of retaliation from Iran, weighed on global share prices and sent oil prices surging on concerns the Strait of Hormuz would remain largely closed. Trump has expressed his frustration with his allies in NATO (North Atlantic Treaty

Organization) and elsewhere for not joining his war, this week telling countries that rely on fuel shipments through the strait to “just grab it.” Britain chaired a virtual meeting on Thursday of some 40 countries to explore ways to restore freedom of navigation that did not produce any specific agreement, although participants agreed that all nations should be able to use the waterway freely, one official said. The UN Security Council is set to vote on Saturday on a Bahraini resolution to protect commercial shipping in and around the strait, diplomats said, but veto-wielding China made clear its opposition to authorizing any use of force. Iran has effectively shut down the strait, which normally carries about a fifth of the world’s total oil trade, in retaliation for US-Israeli attacks that began on Feb. 28. Tehran offered a competing vision for future control of the strait, and said it was drafting a protocol with neighboring Oman that would require ships to obtain permits and licenses. The European Union’s foreign policy chief Kaja Kallas pushed back against Tehran’s plan, saying Iran cannot be allowed to charge countries a bounty to let ships pass. “International law doesn’t recognize pay-to-pass schemes,” wrote Kallas on social media. There are fears the conflict may leave Iran with a stranglehold over Middle East energy supplies now that it has shown that it can block the Strait of Hormuz by targeting oil tankers and attacking Gulf countries hosting US troops. Gulf states say they reserve the right to self-defense but have refrained from responding militarily to repeated Iranian attacks over the past month, seeking to avoid escalation into a far more devastating all-out Middle East war. Thousands of people have been killed and tens of thousands injured across the Middle East since the war began, with the head of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies delegation saying on Thursday that medical needs were rising exponentially and supplies could run low.

- [Black Saturday: A moment of pause](#) (2026-04-03 16:08)

BLACK Saturday marks a day of silence and grief as Jesus Christ was laid in his tomb following his crucifixion. According to biblical accounts, in Luke 23:50-56, after Jesus Christ’s death on the cross on Friday, Joseph of Arimathea led his burial. Joseph was a council member who opposed Jesus’ crucifixion. Joseph requested that Pontius Pilate have Christ’s body taken down. He then had the body wrapped in linen, and placed in a new, unused rock-hewn tomb. In John 19:39, Joseph was said to have been accompanied by Nicodemus, who brought myrrh and aloes spices to prepare the body. For many Filipino families, Black Saturday is a time to slow down, reflect and gather in prayer as they await the resurrection of Jesus on Easter Sunday. As a day of collective mourning, it is a time when broadcast stations suspend their regular programming and businesses remain closed. Some also observe traditional beliefs, avoiding travel due to the notion that, with Jesus in the tomb, they are left unprotected. In the evening, the Easter Vigil Mass is celebrated, marking the end of Lent and the beginning of Easter. Lingayen-Dagupan Archbishop Socrates Villegas emphasized that the darkness that followed Christ’s suffering and death continues unless people proclaim Him as the Son of God. “Since that mockery, since that insult, since that murder of God 2,000 years ago, there will always be darkness until we proclaim truly this is the Son of God,” he said in a video message. Villegas said this same darkness persists today, fueled by humanity’s continued

rejection of God and his teachings. He said there persists a widespread mockery and blasphemy against God, the Church and its leaders, and that these acts of insult and ridicule continue to contribute to the spiritual darkness enveloping the world. Villegas called on the faithful to ponder and acknowledge their complicity in this darkness, and urged them to admit their sins without excuses. “What should be done is only one: to bow down our heads, accept that the Lord is Lord. Accept that we have mocked the Lord and we have contributed to that mockery. Accept that we have insulted the Lord, and we have laughed as he was being insulted. Accept that we have stripped the Lord naked, and then we gambled over his garments,” he said. Those who choose to stand up for God will be rewarded with “a new life, a new light, a new Easter,” Villegas said. In his Good Friday message, President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. urged Filipinos to live with “greater faith, humility and compassion.” In a message posted on his social media, Marcos called on Filipinos to reflect on the sacrifice of Christ. “For in it, we see a love that did not turn away from suffering, but chose to embrace it for each one of us. May this day call us to live with greater faith, humility and compassion,” he said. On Good Friday, Catholic devotees take part in street processions reenacting the crucifixion, with some individuals even nailed to wooden crosses. Others engage in self-flagellation, whipping their backs until they bleed as an act of penance to atone for sins or fulfill a religious vow. Philippine National Police (PNP) chief Police Gen. Jose Melencio Nartatez Jr. took to the streets on Good Friday to personally inspect security measures at Metro Manila’s busiest transport terminals, churches and other high-traffic areas. “Leadership is not just about giving orders from behind a desk,” Nartatez said. “I lead by example by being on the ground, seeing the situation for myself, and ensuring our personnel are ready to respond when needed.” Joining Nartatez were senior police officials, including National Capital Region Police Office Chief Anthony Aberin, Police Regional Office 3 Chief Rogelio Peñones Jr., Manila Police District (MPD) Director Arnold Abad, Quezon City Police District Director Randy Glenn Silvio and PNP spokesman Randulf Tũaño. In Quiapo, Manila, thousands of devotees of the Black Nazarene took part in the traditional Good Friday procession, which lasted more than 13 hours. The procession started at 11:33 p.m. on Thursday, which was earlier than scheduled. The carriage carrying the image returned to Quiapo Church at 12:51 p.m. on Friday. The MPD deployed 3,200 officers along the 3.8-kilometer procession route.

- [Chinese 'ghost ships' defy tracking, threaten Philippine security](#) (2026-04-03 16:07)

THE murky world of Automatic Identification System (AIS) manipulation is no longer limited to dredgers in Manila Bay. From cargo ships to tankers, and even state-linked maritime militias, vessels across the globe are exploiting loopholes in the AIS, the international framework for tracking ships and ensuring maritime safety. In the Philippines, these practices are raising red flags for authorities and maritime watchdogs alike. AIS, mandated by the International Maritime Organization (IMO), functions as a vessel’s passport, broadcasting its identity, flag and location to authorities and other ships. But as SeaLight director, retired United States Air Force colonel Ray Powell, explained in an exclusive interview, some vessels exploit AIS to operate under multiple identities, masking ownership and activity. “Every ship should have a single, verifiable identity,” Powell said. “What we are seeing now is ships switching flags and

identities back and forth, sometimes multiple times a day. It's like showing up at the airport with multiple passports — legal for individuals only in very limited circumstances, impossible for vessels.” In Manila Bay, two dredgers — Bucao Star and Aurora 168 — illustrate the problem locally. The Bucao Star, first spotted off Bataan in 2022 flying the Sierra Leone flag, shares an IMO number with Guang Zhou Star, a Chinese-built vessel, suggesting the same ship is operating under two identities. Despite flying the Philippine flag in late 2025, it continues to broadcast its Sierra Leone registration on AIS. Similarly, the Kang Ling 539, originally launched in China as He Xing 669, has cycled through over 30 identities, spanning flags from Sierra Leone and Panama to the Philippines. Powell said these overlapping identities allow ships to obscure ownership and regulatory compliance, often through shell companies in the Philippines controlled by foreign entities. “Dredgers may seem benign, but they are just the tip of the iceberg,” Powell said. “If you're manipulating AIS here, you could be doing the same thing anywhere else.” AIS manipulation is not confined to dredgers. Cargo ships and tankers frequently switch identities to conceal activities such as ship-to-ship oil transfers or cargo routing through restricted regions. Powell cited incidents near Taiwan, where vessels involved in seabed disruptions switched multiple flags and identities to avoid detection. Even state-linked vessels, including maritime militias and Chinese Coast Guard ships, exploit AIS by going “dark” — turning off their broadcasts — or adopting generic or false identification numbers to conceal operations. “Sometimes the AIS number is just 123456 instead of a legitimate registration,” Powell said. “It's meant to confuse authorities and hide activity.” These manipulations create tactical blind spots for navies and coast guards, complicating real-time responses. In the Philippines, vessels can appear to be local dredgers on AIS screens while actually being foreign-controlled, allowing them to operate outside legitimate areas. Powell cited dredgers venturing to Northern Luzon, far beyond authorized zones, potentially for intelligence gathering, seabed mapping or resource staging. Powell emphasized that technology can help mitigate the threat of AIS manipulation. AI-powered tracking systems now allow authorities to detect suspicious activity in near real-time, rather than waiting for retrospective reports. Private maritime intelligence companies like Windward, aggregate AIS data to identify anomalies, and alert regulators and governments. Yet gaps remain in interagency and international coordination. Powell noted that much of the world's maritime data sharing remains inefficient, relying on liaison officers and outdated “fusion centers.” Moving toward cloud-based platforms and international cooperation is essential to make AIS anomalies harder to exploit. “Transparency is the first line of defense,” Powell said. “By shining a light on these activities, we make it harder for ships to operate in the shadows. The Philippines is paying attention, but vigilance must be constant. AIS manipulation is not just a local issue — it's a global challenge with very real local consequences.” On Friday, SeaLight said a Chinese deep-sea research vessel appears to be operating inside the Philippines' exclusive economic zone (EEZ) without authorization. Citing maritime tracking data from StarboardIntel, SeaLight said the vessel, Tan Suo Er Hao, left Sanya Port on March 15 and has been conducting survey operations in Philippine waters. Between March 21 and 31, the vessel conducted surveys near Benham Rise, encroaching on the edge of the Philippine EEZ. It later passed through the Luzon Strait and lingered about 50 nautical miles from the Batanes Islands on April 1, also within the

EEZ. As of April 3, the Tan Suo Er Hao was positioned at approximately 19.6°N, 119.1°E, or about 100 nautical miles from the nearest Philippine baseline near the Babuyan Islands. Operated by the Chinese Academy of Sciences' Institute of Deep-Sea Science and Engineering, the Tan Suo Er Hao serves as a mothership for China's Fendouzhe and Shenhaiyongshi, both crewed submersibles. The vessel has 13 onboard laboratories and a full-ocean-depth geological winch, giving it significant capability for both scientific research and intelligence collection. Under Article 246 of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), marine scientific research in a coastal state's EEZ requires the coastal state's "express consent." The Philippines has not reportedly granted such consent for the vessel's activities. Maritime analysts say the presence of research vessels like the Tan Suo Er Hao in foreign EEZs can carry both scientific and strategic implications, particularly in contested maritime areas. This is not the first time that a Chinese research vessel was monitored inside the country's EEZ. In May 2025, the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) expelled the Tansuo 3 from the waters off Burgos, Ilocos Norte, where it was allegedly conducting illegal deep-sea mapping operations. Tansuo 3—one of China's largest and most advanced research vessels—was accompanied by the manned submersible Shanghai Yongshi (Deep Sea Warrior), capable of diving up to 4,500 meters. According to Jun Kajee, a Seelight analyst and researcher, China is increasingly using research and survey vessels to assert control over contested waters across the Indo-Pacific. "These missions blur the line between legitimate scientific research and covert intelligence gathering or strategic signaling, allowing China to expand its maritime presence while maintaining plausible deniability," said Kajee. He emphasized this tactic is central to China's "gray zone" maritime strategy—a methodical campaign of non-violent, incremental coercion designed to assert dominance without triggering armed conflict. The approach blends civilian cover, legal ambiguity, and constant presence to shift control in Beijing's favor. Kajee noted that Chinese survey vessels conduct oceanographic research, resource mapping, and data collection—activities that ostensibly serve civilian purposes but can also bolster military operations. The dual-use capabilities provide valuable intelligence for submarine routing, undersea cable monitoring, and acoustic sensor deployment. He said survey vessels rarely operate alone, and are often escorted by China Coast Guard or maritime militia ships.

- [International Criminal Court set to issue judgment on Duterte drug war case](#) (2026-04-03 16:06)

(UPDATE) THE Appeals Chamber of the International Criminal Court (ICC) announced Thursday that it will issue its judgment on April 22 on former president Rodrigo Duterte's appeal challenging the court's jurisdiction. In a scheduling order dated April 2, the five-judge panel, presided over by Judge Luz del Carmen Ibáñez Carranza, said the ruling will be delivered in open court at 11 a.m. Duterte is seeking to overturn a decision by ICC Pre-Trial Chamber I issued Oct. 23, 2025, which dismissed his challenge to the court's jurisdiction. He has argued the tribunal has no legal authority to hear the case. The ICC has been investigating Duterte's antidrug campaign, during which thousands of suspected drug users and dealers were killed in

operations carried out by state forces and vigilantes between 2011 and 2019. The period spans his tenure as mayor of Davao City and later as president. The Philippines remained a member of the ICC until its formal withdrawal in March 2019. However, the court has maintained that it retains jurisdiction over alleged crimes committed while the country was still a party to the Rome Statute. The forthcoming ruling is expected to determine whether the case will proceed to trial or be dismissed on jurisdictional grounds. Other members of the Appeals Chamber are Judges Tomoko Akane, Solomy Balungi Bossa, Gocha Lordkipanidze and Erdenebalsuren Damdin.

- [Watchdog calls for stronger social media controls to shield minors](#) (2026-04-03 16:05)

(UPDATE) AS governments in Asia consider stricter controls on over social media, Philippine advocates are calling for greater oversight of online platforms to protect minors from the risks of unregulated digital spaces. In Thailand, authorities have focused on mandatory 24-hour takedowns of illegal content and are weighing measures to restrict social media access for children under 16 without parental consent, aiming to curb cyberbullying and exposure to inappropriate material. In the Philippines, Dr. Michael Aragon, founder and chairman of the Kapisanan ng Social Media Broadcasters ng Pilipinas, Inc. (KSMBPI), is urging the government to strengthen control over social media platforms. In an interview with The Manila Times, Aragon said the rapid expansion of digital platforms has created a “new world” where communication is instant and largely unregulated, leaving minors vulnerable to exploitation, misinformation, and online abuse. “Social media cannot be fully controlled, even by governments,” Aragon said. “But what we can do is influence behavior through education, discipline, and responsibility — especially for those who create and distribute content.” Founded in 2017 as a professional and training organization for aspiring social media broadcasters, KSMBPI has evolved in response to social media’s increasing role in daily life, particularly during and after the pandemic. Its programs compress the fundamentals of journalism, ethics, and broadcasting into short, intensive courses designed to be accessible to ordinary citizens. Aragon warned that the same accessibility that allows individuals — including minors — to participate in online discourse also exposes them to unverified information and harmful content. Without proper guidance, young users may unknowingly spread false information or become targets of abuse. KSMBPI’s strategy focuses on education and self-regulation. Its training programs teach participants how to produce content responsibly, uphold ethical standards, verify information, and navigate legal frameworks such as libel and data privacy laws. “These are not just technical skills,” Aragon said. “We are teaching responsibility — how to think before posting, how to protect others, and how to ensure that what is shared contributes positively to society.” Members of KSMBPI, who come from diverse sectors including students, professionals, and community workers, are encouraged to act as “frontliners” in monitoring online content within their communities. The group aims to build a nationwide network of trained social media practitioners, creating a decentralized yet coordinated watchdog system. “If we have trained individuals in every barangay, they can help ensure that information circulating online is accurate and safe, especially for our children,”

Aragon said. He stressed that the organization's approach did not seek to curtail freedom of expression. "We are not here to silence anyone," he said. "We are here to strengthen the fourth estate by making it ethical, informed, and protective of the public, especially the youth."

- [Ateneo prof introduces robot for archaeological studies](#) (2026-04-03 16:04)

(UPDATE) AN archaeology professor of the Ateneo de Manila University (ADMU) has introduced a robot that can help excavate archaeological sites with "greater consistency, precision, and care compared to manual methods." "ArcheoBot" was created in collaboration with the Ateneo Laboratory for Intelligent Visual Environments (Alive) and was introduced by Dr. Alfred Pawlik, a professor of ADMU's Department of Sociology and Anthropology, as well as the research coordinator of the Dr. Rosita G. Leong School of Social Sciences and director of the Anthropological and Sociology Institute of the university. Pawlik's work focuses on Southeast Asian archaeology, hunter-gatherer societies, and past human behaviors. ArcheoBot was introduced on March 27 at the Escaler Hall during the Ateneo Breakthroughs lecture featuring Pawlik. By integrating robotics and machine learning into archaeological excavation, the project enhances precision, minimizes human error, and reveals details that deepen understanding of early human life in Southeast Asia. Pawlik said the idea grew out of a long-standing ambition to build a machine that could perform the physically demanding parts of excavation while reducing human error — especially when teams are tired, inexperienced, or working across multiple trenches at once. Moreover, the robot is imagined not only as a digging machine, but as a "smart, multipurpose system that can detect finds, recognize archaeological features and contexts, and carefully retrieve objects without damaging them." Using the robot, Pawlik presented evidence that by around 40,000 years ago, humans were already venturing across island chains such as Palawan and Mindoro. By using the ArcheoBot, ADMU said these experimental and interdisciplinary efforts aim to reconstruct not only artifacts but entire systems of knowledge, making visible the invisible technologies that rarely survive in the archaeological record.

- [Go calls for stronger grassroots governance](#) (2026-04-03 16:03)

SEN. Christopher Lawrence "Bong" Go has called for stronger grassroots governance as communities brace for the potential impact of a global oil crisis driven by the war in the Middle East. In a video message delivered during the Liga ng mga Barangay (LNB) Masbate Provincial Chapter Annual Congress 2026 at the Crown Legacy Hotel last Monday, Go emphasized the critical role of barangay (village) officials in delivering frontline services and responding to crises. "Diligence, compassion, and service are all I can offer you. I am not a politician who makes promises, I do my job for Filipinos," Go said. Barangay frontliners recognized Go lauded barangay officials as essential pillars of governance, noting their role in addressing everyday community concerns — from health services to dispute resolution. "You are the heroes of the pandemic. The national government would have suffered if it were not for you," he said, urging continued dedication to public service, emphasizing that barangay leaders serve as the first line of government response, particularly during emergencies and economic

disruptions. Push for local governance reforms

The senator highlighted several legislative measures to strengthen barangay institutions and improve public service delivery. Among these is Republic Act (RA) 11462, which postponed barangay and Sangguniang Kabataan (SK) elections to allow officials more time to implement programs for their constituents. Go also reiterated his support for digital transformation in government through RA 112254, which seeks to enhance efficiency, transparency, and accessibility of public services through digitalization. In addition, he refiled Senate Bill (SB) 178, or the proposed Magna Carta for Barangays, which seeks to grant barangay officials benefits comparable to those received by regular government employees. “Captains, I will fight for you always. We have fought for the postponement of the barangay elections three times. And I also filed the Magna Carta for Barangay Officials,” Go said. He also filed SB 412, or the Magna Carta for Barangay Health Workers, which seeks to provide job security, compensation, and benefits to community health workers.

Preparing for economic pressures

Amid rising concerns over a possible global oil supply disruption, Go called on barangay officials to remain accessible and responsive to constituents, particularly vulnerable sectors. “I want to ask barangay officials — please keep your offices open for our citizens. Let’s prioritize the poor who have nowhere else to go but the government,” he said. Analysts have warned that escalating geopolitical tensions in the Middle East could disrupt global oil supply chains, potentially driving up fuel prices and affecting basic goods — impacts that are often felt most acutely at the community level.

Continued support for local leaders

Go also acknowledged local officials present at the event, including Liga ng mga Barangay Masbate President Eric Castillo and Masbate Governor Richard Kho. He concluded by assuring barangay leaders of his continued support. “Just call me 'Kuya Bong Go' when we meet. I will continue to serve my countrymen to the best of my ability, because it is my habit to serve,” he said.

- [House bill seeks to create more jobs in provinces](#) (2026-04-03 16:02)

1TAHANAN Party-list Rep. Nathaniel Oducado has filed a bill mandating the creation of more jobs in the provinces to combat poverty amid the ongoing war in the Middle East. Oducado filed House Bill (HB) 8746, or the “Rural Employment Assistance Program Act (REAP)” on March 24, which seeks to provide poor families in rural areas with temporary jobs. REAP will give short-term work, 45 to 90 days each year, to qualified individuals. In a statement, Oducado said that rural poverty remains higher than urban poverty because many jobs depend on farming and fishing, which are often seasonal, low-paying, and easily affected by disasters and price changes. “Many people in the provinces want to work but cannot find steady employment, and without a stable income, they leave their families for cities and for other countries,” Oducado, a lawyer, added. He further said that the conflict in the Middle East shows that overseas jobs should not always be relied upon to provide employment. Under HB 8746, the Department of Social Welfare and Development and local governments will be mandated to undertake projects, including farm support, road repair, and disaster preparedness work. He said his bill ensures workers get paid at least 75 percent of the minimum wage and receive basic insurance coverage. “This bill provides both immediate income and hope for a better future in rural communities,” Oducado said.

- [DOJ to balance confidentiality in ICI infrastructure project findings](#) (2026-04-03 16:01)

(UPDATE) THE Department of Justice (DOJ) said it will carefully balance transparency and confidentiality when deciding which portions of the report by the Independent Commission for Infrastructure (ICI) can be disclosed to the public. Justice Secretary Frederick Vida said the report, submitted to the department in late March, is still under review as officials work to separate sensitive case information from portions that may be released. "We need to sift through the records. The confidential report, particularly the case data, that's something we cannot disclose; that's sensitive information," Vida said. The ICI report, which has drawn public and congressional interest, contains findings and recommendations related to anomalous infrastructure projects, including alleged irregularities that may have legal implications. Vida said the DOJ recognizes the public's right to information but stressed that disclosures must not compromise ongoing investigations or violate confidentiality rules. "As to the parts that are not confidential, definitely the public has the right to know," he said, adding that the department will release information "to the extent appropriate." The DOJ chief noted that information tied to active preliminary investigations or cases already filed would be handled with caution to avoid affecting proceedings. "If it relates to our cases, we don't want that disclosed in a way that could affect the process," he said. The justice chief added that certain portions of the report — particularly those involving systems or proposals developed by the ICI — may be referred back to the commission for disclosure. "There are parts of the report about a system that the ICI is creating. That would be more for them to disclose since they are the originator," he said. Vida acknowledged that the DOJ has yet to complete a full review of the document, noting that the evaluation process involves determining which information may already be shared, especially if it pertains to cases that have been filed or referred to the Office of the Ombudsman. Calls to release the full ICI report have intensified in recent days, with lawmakers and the public invoking transparency. The DOJ, however, maintained that any disclosure must be weighed against the integrity of ongoing legal processes and the protection of sensitive information.

- [Palace: No 'energy lockdown'](#) (2026-04-03 10:15)

MANILA, Philippines — Malacañang on Friday dismissed as "fake news" claims that there would be an energy lockdown starting April 20, 2026. Palace Press Officer Claire Castro issued the statement in response to a social media post about an alleged energy lockdown. "Fake news. Please spread, this is fake news," Castro said in a viber message. The advisory, which even bears the logo of the Department of Energy, urged the public to prepare power banks, solar equipment, candles, lamps, food, and other essentials in anticipation of the energy lockdown.

- [Advincula draws parallel between Middle East conflict, Christ's crucifixion, calls for prayer and peace](#) (2026-04-03 09:59)

MANILA, Philippines — Manila Archbishop Jose Cardinal Advincula on Friday likened the Middle East conflict to Jesus' crucifixion, urging the faithful to pray for peace. In his homily during the Celebration of the Lord's Passion, Advincula said that the story of Jesus' suffering was not

confined to the past but was being retold in the present through the pain and struggles of countless individuals affected by the war. Advincula highlighted the impact of the Middle East conflict on Filipinos, particularly Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) and their families, and the effects of the rising fuel costs on the average Filipino household. "Even if we are here in Manila, we will not be separated from their experience. It is as if every shot of a gun there, there is a shriek that reaches here," he said. Advincula outlined three ways to respond to the conflict: through silence and prayer, unity with the suffering of others, and a commitment to peace. "In the silence of the cross, are we ready to let the mercy of God speak in our hearts?" he implored the faithful to ponder on, urging them that it is in silence that "we also hear the weak voice of God." The Cardinal also reminded the faithful of their duty to stand in solidarity with those who are suffering, particularly OFWs, families burdened by economic hardships, and victims of war. He encouraged acts of compassion, no matter how small, as a way to embody God's mercy. "Sometimes, it is enough to listen, to remember, and to show compassion. In a simple way, we become the hands of God for others," he said. Advincula underscored the importance of prayer for peace, echoing the call of Pope Francis for the global Church to unite for an end to the war. He reminded the faithful that true peace began in the heart, through forgiveness, love, and the rejection of anger. "Together with Mary, let us pray with full trust. Father, in your hands, we entrust our lives. And the peace of the world," he said.

- [7 injured as ceiling at NAIA 1 arrival extension collapses \(2026-04-03 07:50\)](#)

MANILA, Philippines — At least seven people were injured after a portion of the ceiling at the recently opened Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA) Terminal 1 arrival extension collapsed on Friday. The extension, which opened on Feb. 8, 2026, to improve passenger flow, has been partially cordoned off for structural assessment. Airport authorities, including the Manila International Airport Authority (MIAA), are working with the private operator, New NAIA Infra Corp. (NNIC), to assess the situation and implement safety measures. Terminal 1 remained normal following the incident. "Medical team, airport security personnel, and the PNP Aviation Security Group responded at once, secured the area, and assisted those affected," NNIC said. It added that NNIC's engineering team "has since inspected the surrounding section and confirmed that it is safe for normal operations." NNIC said that an investigation was ongoing to determine the cause of the incident and was working closely with authorities to determine the necessary action based on the findings. The arrival extension area was part of recent efforts to decongest the main terminal by relocating services such as car rentals and taxis. The incident adds to a history of ceiling-related failures at NAIA over the last two decades. On July 15, 2020, 100 square meters of gypsum board collapsed at Terminal 3 food hall. There were no injuries. On Jan. 28, 2016, a restaurant ceiling facade in Terminal 3's pre-departure area fell, slightly injuring a foreign passenger. On May 17, 2011, a concrete ceiling plaster caved in at the Terminal 1 baggage area, injuring two personnel. On Sept. 10, 2008, a portion of the Terminal 3 baggage claim ceiling fell. On March 27, 2006, just days before a scheduled opening, a 100-square-meter section of Terminal 3 arrival area collapsed.

- [Braving high fuel costs, Filipinos flock to crucifixion spectacle \(2026-04-03 05:33\)](#)

SAN FERNANDO, Pampanga — Hundreds of Filipinos and tourists flocked to a sun-bleached field north of Manila on Good Friday to witness one of the country's most blood-soaked displays of religious fervor, undeterred by rising fuel prices driven by the Middle East war. Scores of bare-chested flagellants with covered faces walked barefoot through the dusty streets of Pampanga province's San Fernando as they flogged their backs with bamboo whips in scorching heat. AFP journalists saw devotees deliberately puncturing their skin with glass shards attached to a small wooden paddle to ensure their bleeding during the ritual, a way to atone for sins and seek miracles from God. "I'm doing this to pray for the healing of my seven-month-old baby, who is suffering from pneumonia," John David, clutching a whip in one hand, told AFP at the beginning of the procession. "My grandfather started this, then my father, and now it's my turn," the 49-year-old said. "I have been witnessing miracles of healing through the years because of this act of faith." The Catholic-majority country's annual spectacle re-enacting the last moments of Jesus Christ typically draws up to 12,000 local and foreign tourists. Many in the crowd had driven for hours to witness the play's climax, in which devotees allow three-inch nails to be driven into their palms before they are hoisted upright on crosses. Ricky Margate, 57, told AFP he had driven a motorcycle to the site this year instead of his car because it consumes less fuel. "I think that the high fuel prices that I have to pay to be here are just part of my sacrifices this Holy Week," Margate told AFP. Fuel prices have hit historic highs in the country since the United States and Israel launched their attack on Iran over a month ago, prompting President Ferdinand Marcos last week to declare a "national energy emergency". Businesswoman Gina Villanueva said she had driven 70 kilometers (43 miles) from Manila to "experience seeing this devotion firsthand". "(I'm praying) for good health and also for the fuel prices to go down, because many are already suffering," Villanueva, 42, said while wiping sweat from her brow. Snack vendor Mhekyle Salazar, 22, said she was relieved that pilgrims were showing up despite higher transportation costs. "I guess fuel prices are no match for the strength of our faith and tradition," she told AFP.

- ['ArcheoBot' introduced to speed up archaeological study](#) (2026-04-03 03:43)

MANILA, Philippines - An archaeology professor of the Ateneo de Manila University (ADMU) has introduced a robot that would help excavate archaeological sites with "greater consistency, precision, and care than via manual methods." Called "ArcheoBot", the robot was created in collaboration with the Ateneo Laboratory for Intelligent Visual Environments (ALIVE) and was introduced by Dr. Alfred Pawlik, a professor of the ADMU's Department of Sociology and Anthropology, as well as the research coordinator of the Dr. Rosita G. Leong School of Social Sciences and director of the Anthropological and Sociology Institute of the university. Pawlik's work is focused on Southeast Asian archaeology, hunter-gatherer societies, and past human behavior. The robot was introduced on March 27 at the Escaler Hall during the Ateneo Breakthroughs lecture featuring Pawlik. By integrating robotics and machine learning into archaeological excavation, the project enhances precision, minimizes human error, and reveals details that further deepen the understanding of early human life in the Southeast Asian region. Pawlik said that the idea grew out of a long standing ambition to build a machine that

could take on the physically demanding parts of excavation while also reducing the kind of human error that could happen in the field—especially when teams are tired, inexperienced, or working across multiple trenches at once. The robot is imagined not only as a digging machine, but as a "smart, multipurpose system that can detect finds, recognize archaeological features and contexts, and carefully retrieve objects without damaging them." Using the robot, Pawlik presented evidence that by around 40,000 years ago, humans were already venturing across island chains such as Palawan and Mindoro. By using the ArchaeoBot, the Ateneo said that these experimental and interdisciplinary efforts aim to reconstruct not only artifacts but entire systems of knowledge, making visible the invisible technologies that rarely survive in the archaeological record.

- [Watchdog pushes for stronger controls on social media to shield minors](#) (2026-04-03 02:54)

MANILA, Philippines — As governments in Asia consider stricter controls over social media, Philippine advocates are calling for greater oversight of online platforms to protect minors from the risks of unregulated digital spaces. In Thailand, authorities have focused on mandatory 24-hour takedowns of illegal content and are weighing measures to restrict social media access for children under 16 without parental consent, aiming to curb cyberbullying and exposure to inappropriate material. In the Philippines, Dr. Michael Aragon, founder and chairman of the Kapisanan ng Social Media Broadcasters ng Pilipinas, Inc. (KSMBPI), is urging the government to actively strengthen control over social media platforms. In an interview with *The Manila Times*, Aragon said the rapid expansion of digital platforms has created a “new world” where communication is instant and largely unregulated, leaving minors vulnerable to exploitation, misinformation, and online abuse. “Social media cannot be fully controlled, even by governments,” Aragon said. “But what we can do is influence behavior through education, discipline, and responsibility—especially for those who create and distribute content.” Founded in 2017 as a professional and training organization for aspiring social media broadcasters, KSMBPI has evolved in response to social media’s increasing role in daily life, particularly during and after the pandemic. Its programs compress the fundamentals of journalism, ethics, and broadcasting into short, intensive courses designed to be accessible to ordinary citizens. Aragon warned that the same accessibility that allows individuals—including minors—to participate in online discourse also exposes them to unverified information and harmful content. Without proper guidance, young users may unknowingly spread false information or become targets of abuse. KSMBPI’s strategy focuses on education and self-regulation. Its training programs teach participants how to produce content responsibly, uphold ethical standards, verify information, and navigate legal frameworks such as libel and data privacy laws. “These are not just technical skills,” Aragon said. “We are teaching responsibility—how to think before posting, how to protect others, and how to ensure that what is shared contributes positively to society.” Members of KSMBPI, who come from diverse sectors including students, professionals, and community workers, are encouraged to act as “frontliners” in monitoring online content within their communities. The group aims to build

a nationwide network of trained social media practitioners, creating a decentralized yet coordinated watchdog system. “If we have trained individuals in every barangay, they can help ensure that information circulating online is accurate and safe, especially for our children,” Aragon said. He stressed that the organization’s approach did not seek to curtail freedom of expression. “We are not here to silence anyone,” he said. “We are here to strengthen the fourth estate by making it ethical, informed, and protective of the public, especially the youth.”

- [PNP chief leads by example, hits the streets to personally inspect Holy Week security in Metro Manila](#) (2026-04-03 02:25)

MANILA, Philippines — As millions of Filipinos prepared to travel and attend religious gatherings this Holy Week, General Jose Melencio Nartatez Jr., Philippine National Police (PNP) chief, took a hands-on approach, hitting the streets to personally inspect security measures at Metro Manila’s busiest transport terminals, churches, and other high-traffic areas at the start of the holiday. Opting to see the situation for himself rather than relying solely on reports, Nartatez ensured that police officers were not only deployed but also visibly stationed where crowds were expected to swell. Assistance desks were checked, and response teams were on standby to address emergencies. “Leadership is not just about giving orders from behind a desk,” Nartatez said. “I lead by example by being on the ground, seeing the situation for myself, and ensuring our personnel are ready to respond when needed.” The PNP chief stressed that physical presence in key locations was critical during peak periods such as Holy Week, allowing law enforcers to respond swiftly to incidents, manage crowd flow, and provide immediate assistance to the public. Joining Nartatez were senior police officials, including National Capital Region Police Office (NCRPO) Chief Anthony Aberin, Police Regional Office 3 Chief Rogelio Peñones Jr., Manila Police District (MPD) Director Arnold Abad, Quezon City Police District (QCPD) Director Randy Glenn Silvio, and PNP Spokesman Randulf Tuaño. The team coordinated with local authorities to verify that security measures were actively implemented on site. With large crowds expected throughout the observance, the PNP chief said that highly visible deployments and direct engagement in strategic areas would serve both as a deterrent to crime and a reassurance to travelers and devotees. The initiative is part of the PNP’s Holy Week operations under the current thrust, “Bagong PNP para sa Bagong Pilipinas: Serbisyong Mabilis, Tapat, at Nararamdaman,” which promotes a responsive, community-oriented police force anchored on being present where it matters most.

- [Devotees join Good Friday procession](#) (2026-04-03 02:21)

MANILA, Philippines — Thousands of devotees of the Black Nazarene took part in the Good Friday procession, expressing their deep veneration for the image. According to the Manila Disaster Risk Reduction and Management (DRRM) Department, the procession started at 11:30 p.m. on Thursday. As of posting time, the Andas—the carriage carrying the image—is at Concepcion Aguila, which is the halfway point of the 3.8-kilometer-long procession. The Manila DRRM’s medical teams are also on standby to assist devotees who may require immediate attention.

- [Marcos calls for 'faith, humility, compassion' on Good Friday](#) (2026-04-03 02:18)

MANILA, Philippines — President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. urged Filipinos to live with "greater faith, humility, and compassion" as he joined the Catholic faithful in commemorating Good Friday. In a message posted on his social media, Marcos called on Filipinos to reflect on the sacrifice of Jesus Christ this Good Friday. "Today, we stand before the Cross. In silence, in reflection, in gratitude," the President said. "For in it, we see a love that did not turn away from suffering, but chose to embrace it for each one of us. May this day call us to live with greater faith, humility and compassion," he added.

- [DOJ to balance transparency, confidentiality in release of ICI report](#) (2026-04-03 02:11)

MANILA, Philippines — The Department of Justice (DOJ) said it would carefully balance transparency and confidentiality in deciding which portions of the report by the Independent Commission for Infrastructure (ICI) could be disclosed to the public. Justice Secretary Frederick Vida said the report, submitted to the department in late March, is still under review, with officials working to separate sensitive case information from portions that may be released. "We need to sift through the records. The confidential report, particularly the case data, that's something we cannot disclose, that's sensitive information," Vida said. The ICI report, which has drawn public and congressional interest, contains findings and recommendations related to anomalous infrastructure projects, including alleged irregularities that may have legal implications. Vida said the DOJ recognized the public's right to information but stressed that disclosures must not compromise ongoing investigations or violate confidentiality rules. "As to the parts that are not confidential, definitely the public has the right to know," he said, adding that the department will release information "to the extent appropriate." The DOJ chief noted that information tied to active preliminary investigations or cases already filed would be handled with caution to avoid affecting proceedings. "If it relates to our cases, we don't want that disclosed in a way that could affect the process," he said. The justice chief added that certain portions of the report—particularly those involving systems or proposals developed by the ICI—may be referred back to the commission for disclosure. "There are parts of the report about a system that the ICI is creating. That would be more for them to disclose since they are the originator," he said. Vida also acknowledged that the DOJ has yet to complete a full review of the document, noting that the evaluation process involves determining which information may already be shared, especially if it pertains to cases that have been filed or referred to the Office of the Ombudsman. Calls to release the full ICI report have intensified in recent days, with lawmakers and the public invoking transparency. The DOJ, however, maintained that any disclosure must be weighed against the integrity of ongoing legal processes and the protection of sensitive information. The department said it would provide updates once the review is completed.

- [ICC to deliver ruling on Duterte jurisdiction appeal on April 22](#) (2026-04-03 01:02)

MANILA, Philippines — The Appeals Chamber of the International Criminal Court (ICC) announced Thursday that it would issue its judgment on former president Rodrigo Duterte's

appeal challenging the court's jurisdiction on April 22, 2026. In a scheduling order dated April 2, the five-judge panel, presided over by Judge Luz del Carmen Ibáñez Carranza, said the ruling would be delivered in open court at 11 a.m. Duterte is seeking to overturn a decision by ICC Pre-Trial Chamber I issued on Oct. 23, 2025, which dismissed his challenge to the court's jurisdiction. He has argued that the tribunal has no legal authority to hear the case. The ICC has been investigating Duterte's anti-drug campaign, during which thousands of suspected drug users and dealers were killed in operations carried out by state forces and vigilantes between 2011 and 2019, spanning his tenure as mayor of Davao City and later as president. The Philippines remained a member of the ICC until its formal withdrawal in March 2019. However, the court has maintained that it retained jurisdiction over alleged crimes committed while the country was still a party to the Rome Statute. The forthcoming ruling is expected to determine whether the case will proceed to trial or be dismissed on jurisdictional grounds. Other members of the Appeals Chamber are Judges Tomoko Akane, Solomy Balungi Bossa, Gocha Lordkipanidze, and Erdenebalsuren Damdin.

- [Russia says it's ready to help Asean address oil crisis](#) (2026-04-02 16:15)

(UPDATE) RUSSIAN Foreign Minister Sergey Viktorovich Lavrov has assured envoys from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) of Russia's readiness to help the 11-member regional bloc address their oil crisis triggered by the Middle East war. The Philippine Embassy in Russia shared this information following Lavrov's recent meeting with Asean envoys led by Philippine Ambassador to Moscow Igor Bailen. Bailen, chairman of the Asean Moscow Committee (AMC), led fellow Asean ambassadors in the annual working luncheon hosted for AMC by Lavrov. The embassy said Lavrov exchanged views with the ambassadors on the developments in the Middle East. He articulated Russia's position and its efforts to find solutions that may be acceptable to all sides. Lavrov also assured them of Russia's "readiness to help Asean countries with their immediate energy requirements, including oil," the embassy posted on Facebook over the weekend. He also reiterated Russia's support for Asean centrality, including through Asean-Russia mechanisms, in building a stable security and cooperation architecture in the Asia-Pacific region, based on respect for international law, equality and openness, it added. The Philippines' sole oil refinery has secured nearly 2.5 million barrels of Russian crude out of "extreme necessity," a stock exchange filing revealed on Monday, as the country seeks to replenish fast-dwindling fuel reserves. The price of fuel hit historic highs since the US-Israeli war with Iran forced the partial closure of the Strait of Hormuz. President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. most recently said stocks could last until June 30. The Agence France-Presse (AFP) reported last week that a tanker filled with Russian crude oil had arrived at the harbor servicing refinery operator Petron Corp., a purchase unthinkable before longtime treaty ally the United States eased sanctions tied to Moscow's war in Ukraine. Bailen shared with Lavrov updates on the Philippines' chairmanship of Asean ahead of the 48th and 49th Asean Summits later this year. He also mentioned the 50th anniversary commemoration of the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia, to which Russia has been a high contracting party since 2004, the year Lavrov assumed his current position. The embassy said

Russia and Asean look forward to the adoption of their 2026-2030 Plan of Action, which is currently being finalized by their diplomatic missions in Jakarta. “The document will seek to enhance their strategic partnership across a wide range of areas, including countering common challenges and threats, trade and investment, high-tech and knowledge-intensive industries, digitalization, energy, and the expansion of business and youth contacts,” the embassy said. Both sides affirmed their mutually beneficial relationship, particularly in light of this year’s 35th anniversary commemoration of Asean-Russia relations, the embassy said.

- [Crude prices surge after Trump speech](#) (2026-04-02 16:13)

WASHINGTON D.C./CAIRO — Hopes for a swift end to the Middle East war faded on Thursday after United States President Donald Trump vowed more aggressive strikes on Iran, in an eagerly anticipated address that disappointed investors hoping for clearer signals of a way out. Stocks slid and oil prices surged after Trump said military operations would be intensified in the next two to three weeks, offering no concrete timeline for ending a conflict that sparked global energy supply chaos and has threatened to send the world economy into a tailspin. “I can say tonight that we are on track to complete all of America’s military objectives shortly, very shortly,” Trump said in a Wednesday evening prime-time speech. “We’re going to hit them extremely hard over the next two to three weeks. We’re going to bring them back to the Stone Ages where they belong.” Trump also suggested the war could escalate if Iranian leaders did not give in to US terms during negotiations, with strikes on Iran’s energy and oil infrastructure possible. No reassurance Benchmark Brent crude prices LCOc1 jumped about 5 percent to \$106.16 per barrel, with little reassurance from Trump’s address about how the critical Strait of Hormuz energy conduit would reopen. Prices had fallen earlier on Thursday after settling lower in the previous session. Stocks took a hit, with US index futures EScv1 down 1 percent and European futures STXEc1 sinking over 1.5 percent. Almost all Asian bourses were in the red, with Japan’s Nikkei.N225 down 1.8 percent and MSCI’s index of other Asia-Pacific shares.MIAPJ0000PUS down more than 1.5 percent. “If he (Trump) was trying to inspire confidence in the markets, he has not done that. The key question in all investors’ minds is ‘When is this going to be over?’, that is what is creating the volatility,” said Russel Chesler, head of investments and capital markets at Vaneck Australia. Shortly after Trump’s speech, the Israeli military said it had identified missiles launched from Iran toward Israeli territory. Thousands of people have been killed across the Middle East since Feb. 28, when the US and Israel struck Iran, triggering Iranian attacks on Israel, US bases and the Gulf states, while opening a new front in Lebanon. Iran also all but closed the Strait of Hormuz, a vital waterway carrying about a fifth of global oil and liquefied natural gas, pushing up energy costs and weighing on Trump’s sagging approval ratings months ahead of pivotal midterm congressional elections. But Trump in his speech said the US did not need the strait, and he challenged allies who rely on oil in the region to work toward reopening it. “Many Americans have been concerned to see the recent rise in gasoline prices here at home,” Trump said. “This short-term increase has been entirely the result of the Iranian regime launching deranged terror attacks against commercial oil tankers of neighboring countries that have

nothing to do with the conflict.” The International Monetary Fund, World Bank and International Energy Agency on Wednesday warned the war was having “substantial, global and highly asymmetric” effects, and said they would coordinate their response, including through potential financial support to those countries hit hardest. In an interview with Reuters earlier on Wednesday, Trump said US-Israeli strikes had ensured Iran would not obtain nuclear weapons, adding that US forces could return with “spot hits” if the threat resurfaces. “They were right at the doorstep [of a nuclear weapon],” Trump said in his TV address, without providing evidence, touting what he said were “swift, decisive, overwhelming victories on the battlefield.” “We are systematically dismantling the regime’s ability to threaten America or project power outside of their borders.” Prior to Trump’s remarks, Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian said in a letter addressed to the American people that his country harbors no enmity toward ordinary Americans. Trump said discussions were ongoing with Iranian leaders he considered less radical than previous leaders. On social media earlier Wednesday, he said Iran had requested a ceasefire but that would not be considered until its Strait of Hormuz blockade ends. Iran denied making any such request. A senior Iranian source told Reuters on Wednesday that Tehran is demanding a guaranteed ceasefire to halt its attacks and said no talks have taken place through intermediaries on a temporary truce. ‘Go to the strait and just take it’ Two security sources from Pakistan, which is mediating in the conflict, told Reuters that Islamabad had proposed a temporary ceasefire but had not heard back from either side. US Vice President JD Vance communicated with intermediaries from Pakistan about the Iran conflict as recently as Tuesday, according to a source briefed on the matter, making clear Trump was open to a ceasefire if certain demands were met. Trump had suggested on Tuesday he could wind down the war soon without a deal, while scaling up threats to withdraw from the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). He told Reuters he planned to express his disgust at NATO for what he considers its lack of support for US objectives in Iran. Trump did not explicitly mention NATO in his address but urged countries in need of oil to buy it from the US or to “build up some delayed courage.” “Go to the Strait and just take it,” Trump said. “Iran has been essentially decimated. The hard part is done, so it should be easy.” European states have sought to appear unruffled, and France’s junior army minister Alice Rufo said operations by North Atlantic Treaty Organization in the Strait of Hormuz would be a breach of international law.

- [Poverty among elderly getting worse, ADB study shows](#) (2026-04-02 16:12)

POVERTY among the elderly is getting worse, as many older Filipinos rely on fragile remittances and unpredictable family support, and lack a formal pension, Rights Report Philippines, a nonprofit rights advocate, said. Citing a July 2025 paper published by the Asian Development Bank (ADB), Rights Report cited the inadequacies of the Philippine pension system. “The country’s pension system is broken; it is ranked nearly last in the world,” the group said. Drawing on multiple data sources, including the Family Income and Expenditure Survey, the Demographic and Health Survey, and a 2020 ADB Institute household survey, the ADB paper “paints a grim portrait of elderly poverty,” Rights Report said. The paper added hard data to findings that a study by University of the Philippines researchers — the Healthy Aging Program

for Pinoy, or HAPPY Senior Citizens study, published in the journal AIMS Public Health — had already flagged: that more than half of elderly Filipinos depend on their families for money, that malnutrition and chronic illness are happening simultaneously within the same elderly population, and that the country is aging faster than its systems can handle. “For many older Filipinos who live alone, the biggest source of income is not a pension or savings. It is money sent home by a family member working abroad,” Rights Report Philippines said. Among older women living alone, it said that remittances make up 39.5 percent of all income — their single largest source of financial support. For older men living alone the share is lower but still significant, and for older couples remittances are a major income stream alongside pension payments, it said. “The problem is that remittances are inherently fragile. They depend on a family member overseas staying employed, staying healthy and continuing to send money. A job loss, a health crisis, a family falling-out or a policy change in a host country can cut that income off entirely,” Rights Report Philippines said. “Unlike a pension — even a small one — remittances have no legal protection, no guarantee and no continuity. For hundreds of thousands of older Filipinos, that is the floor beneath their feet,” it said. “For elderly Filipinos, this means the retirement system, in practice, is not the Social Security System or PhilHealth — it is the hope that a son or daughter working in Saudi Arabia or Hong Kong or Toronto keeps sending money home. Until they can’t,” it added. Rights Report Philippines added that government poverty data tend to treat “the elderly” as a single group. “The ADB study pulls that apart — and the picture it reveals is a steep, largely invisible slide: the older you are, the worse your odds,” it said. Among Filipinos ages 60 to 64, the extreme poverty rate is 4.4 percent. But among those 75 and older, extreme poverty climbs to 8.1 percent and moderate poverty — living on between \$2.15 and \$3.65 a day — hits 29.9 percent, the group said. Put those together and more than one in three Filipinos ages 75 and over, nearly 38 percent, is living on \$3.65 a day or less, it said. “The reasons are not hard to see. As people get older, they stop working. Whatever savings they had run out, health costs rise, spouses die. The likelihood of living alone, with no shared income to fall back on, grows sharply,” it added. Rights Report Philippines said that for the generation now in their late 70s and 80s, most spent their working lives in the informal economy, meaning they never consistently paid into SSS and have little or no pension to draw on. It said that the ADB paper specifically flagged those ages 80 and above — the “oldest old” — as an emerging crisis that Philippine policy has barely begun to address. “In 2022, this group made up 7.96 percent of all elderly Filipinos. By 2050, that share is projected to nearly double to 12.66 percent,” it added. In this age bracket, cancer rates have doubled globally over the past 30 years and are expected to keep rising, Rights Report said. “Cognitive decline becomes more common. The need for specialized, long-term care grows. The Philippines currently has almost no formal infrastructure to provide it,” it said. The ADB study also found that poverty among the elderly is hidden because the government measures poverty at the household level. “So when an elderly person lives in a house with working younger relatives, the combined income lifts the entire household above the poverty line — even if the elderly person has no money at all. Their individual poverty becomes invisible,” it said. This was not just a technical problem as it meant the government’s official poverty counts were almost certainly undercounting the number of elderly Filipinos who were

genuinely struggling, Rights Report said. It also said the programs designed to help the elderly poor were probably missing many of the people who need them most, because those people look fine on paper. “The ADB researchers are careful and measured, as academics tend to be. But their conclusion is clear: the current support systems are not enough, the window to fix them is open but closing, and the people who will pay the price for inaction are already the most vulnerable — older Filipinos who spent their working lives, often in the informal economy, paying into a system that was never really built for them,” it said. “A free birthday cake, in that context, is not a policy. It is a gesture. And gestures, the data make plain, are not enough,” it added.

- [Chinese aggressive actions in West Philippine Sea denounced](#) (2026-04-02 16:11)

(UPDATE) THE Philippines on Thursday condemned the recent aggressive and dangerous actions by Chinese maritime forces against Philippine vessels, aircraft and Filipino fishermen in the West Philippine Sea, saying these incidents “endanger lives, violate international law, and undermine regional peace and stability.” In a statement, the National Maritime Council (NMC) said these “unlawful acts” by the China Coast Guard (CCG), the People’s Liberation Army Navy (PLAN), the Chinese Maritime Militia and other Chinese maritime forces occurred in areas where the Philippines has sovereignty, sovereign rights and jurisdiction. On March 7, the NMC said that a PLAN vessel directed its fire-control radar at BRP Miguel Malvar near Escoda Shoal during a lawful patrol, an act constituting a threat of force. The council also reported that Filipino fishermen at Bajo de Masinloc were harassed on March 17 by Chinese vessels through dangerous maneuvers, sirens and RHIB (rigid-hull inflatable boat) deployment, interfering with their lawful fishing activities. On March 20, it said that a Philippine Coast Guard aircraft conducting a routine maritime patrol over the Kalayaan Island Group was met with flares near Panganiban Reef, endangering aviation safety. Also, on the same day, a BFAR vessel was subjected to a dangerous maneuver by a CCG vessel at Paredes Reef (Discovery Great Reef), the NMC said. On March 26, the council also said that a Philippine navy vessel avoided collision after a PLAN vessel executed an unsafe maneuver near Pag-asa Island, in violation of the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea. “Philippine operations in these areas are lawful and consistent with the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and the 2016 Arbitral Award,” the NMC said. “On the other hand, the activities of China in these areas are inconsistent with international law and the 2002 Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea,” it added. The NMC said the Philippine Coast Guard, the Armed Forces of the Philippines and relevant maritime agencies remained firm in safeguarding Filipino fisherfolk and upholding the country’s sovereignty, sovereign rights and jurisdiction in the West Philippine Sea. The council said the Philippines would also undertake appropriate diplomatic actions and engage existing bilateral dialogue mechanisms toward addressing these incidents and concerns. “The country also reiterates its call on China to withdraw and direct its vessels and maritime assets to cease and desist from illegal, provocative and dangerous actions against Philippine vessels, and to stop activities that violate Philippine sovereignty, sovereign rights and jurisdiction; and to comply with its obligations under international law,” the NMC

said. “The National Maritime Council reaffirms its commitment to a peaceful, lawful and principled approach in protecting the nation’s maritime interests in the West Philippine Sea,” it added. The NMC is the interagency body created by President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. in March 2024 to strengthen the Philippines’ maritime security and increase maritime domain awareness among Filipinos amid China’s aggressive tactics and threats in the West Philippine Sea.

- [Good Friday: A day of sacrifice](#) (2026-04-02 16:10)

GOOD Friday marks a day of solemnity as it commemorates the sacrificial crucifixion of Jesus Christ. As mentioned in Hebrews 9:28, “Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many.” In his homily, Fr. Rolly dela Cruz, rector of the Manila Cathedral, emphasized how Jesus — despite the pain, betrayal and suffering He endured — chose not to give up. Dela Cruz connected the Old Testament’s depiction of the “suffering servant” in the Book of Isaiah with Jesus Christ, pointing out that Jesus embodies the characteristics of the servant. “The suffering servant is a good listener, a good speaker, faithful and trusting,” he said. He highlighted how Jesus spent much of His life hidden and in silence, using that time to listen and grow in submission to God’s will. He challenged the faithful to reflect on their own struggles and remain steadfast in times of adversity, following the example of Jesus, who remained faithful even in suffering. “Jesus could have surrendered, but he did not because He was a faithful servant,” he said. He also reminded the faithful to emulate Jesus’ trust in the Father, even during moments of despair. “The suffering servant is someone who listens, who is faithful and who trusts in the Lord. I hope we are the same,” dela Cruz said. He urged the public to examine their own faithfulness, drawing attention to how modern-day Christians often choose convenience over commitment. For Filipino Catholics, Good Friday marks a day of practicing religious traditions, such as the Siete Palabras (Seven Last Words), or the seven final phrases, that Jesus uttered before He died. Churches will also hold the “Senakulo,” or the traditional play commemorating the life and death of Jesus. Some devotees will also go as far as self-flagellation or crucifixion to reenact the experience of Jesus as He was nailed to the cross. These are common in places like Pampanga and Bulacan, where the devotees use whips and ropes to inflict wounds on themselves as they march barefoot, carrying crosses. As Holy Week continues, dela Cruz implored the public to not only venerate Jesus because it is timely, but also to ensure that even after Holy Week and in times of adversity, their faith remains steadfast.

- [DepEd to discuss school calendar shift](#) (2026-04-02 16:09)

(UPDATE) THE Department of Education (DepEd) said a series of orientations will be held on the implementation of the three-term school calendar beginning school year 2026-2027. In a statement released Wednesday, DepEd said the shift forms part of its broader effort to improve the quality of basic education, strengthen institutional planning, and ensure that schools are better supported in delivering the K to 12 curriculum. The briefings, it said, will cover policies and operational adjustments related to the shift, including assessment and grading, lesson

planning, Education in Emergencies, Flexible Learning Programs, and Strengthened Senior High School Work Immersion. The orientations will begin later this month after the issuance of relevant policies, starting with regional and division officials and school heads.

Orientation sessions for master teachers and classroom teachers will be conducted in May to ensure they can fully observe their 30-day break and will not be required to report during their rest period. These orientations aim to provide clear guidance and ensure stability across schools as preparations for the next school year begin. The Department of Economy, Planning and Development earlier approved the implementation of the three-term school calendar, with the aim of maximizing the length of learning time often disrupted by bad weather as well as celebrations and observances.

- [Group taps digital platforms to expand social services in Manila](#) (2026-04-02 16:08)

A SET of proposed mobile applications aimed at strengthening mental health support, emergency response, and assistance for persons with disabilities took center stage as civic group Junior Chamber International (JCI) Manileña launched its 2026 agenda during its induction ceremony last month. Held at the Manila Polo Club, the event marked the assumption of the new board led by president AJ Dequito and Executive Vice President Gemalyn Belliza, alongside the rollout of the organization's "Laban Manileña" framework for its 46th year. The ceremony was attended by several public figures and JCI officials, including former senator Grace Poe, as well as representatives from JCI Philippines. While the program outlined initiatives on women's rights, LGBTQ+ inclusion, mental health awareness, and cancer advocacy, discussions in the weeks following the induction shifted toward how technology could scale these efforts across the city. On March 23, JCI Manileña officials met with Manila Mayor Isko Moreno and Vice Mayor Chi Atienza to explore the integration of several digital platforms into Manila's social service system. Central to the proposal is a mental health application designed to provide users with accessible information, self-help tools, and connections to support networks. The group said the platform could complement ongoing awareness campaigns, particularly during Suicide Prevention Month, by extending assistance beyond physical events and into everyday use. Another application focuses on individuals with cerebral palsy, offering resources for families and caregivers, including guidance on therapy, daily care, and access to support communities. JCI Manileña said the tool aims to address gaps in information and services often encountered by persons with disabilities and their households. A third platform under discussion is an emergency response application intended to improve coordination during disasters such as fires and typhoons. The system is envisioned to provide real-time reporting and communication features that could connect residents with first responders more efficiently. "It's one thing to talk about helping the community. It's another to give them practical solutions they can actually use," Dequito said following the meeting. The proposed partnership signals a push by both the organization and city officials to incorporate digital tools into public service delivery, particularly in a densely populated urban center like Manila where access and response time remain persistent challenges. Dequito said aligning its applications with the city government's existing systems could enhance disaster

preparedness and expand the reach of social programs, positioning technology as a key component of its 2026 initiatives.

- [Go seeks broader fuel aid coverage](#) (2026-04-02 16:07)

SEN. Christopher “Bong” Go called for more inclusive and responsive fuel relief measures to include farmers and fisherfolk in the subsidy programs being implemented by the government amid persistently high oil prices. Go, a co-author and co-sponsor of Republic Act (RA) 12316, said the law provides a timely mechanism to cushion the impact of rising fuel costs but warned that gaps in assistance programs continue to disadvantage key sectors in food production. The senator raised concerns related to his office by stakeholders in the agriculture and fisheries sectors, who reportedly have not benefited from fuel subsidy initiatives, which largely focus on the transport industry. “There are farmers and fishermen who say they are not included in the list of those receiving aid. Usually, only the transport sector is given. We need to ensure that no one is left behind, especially the sectors that are directly affected by the increase in oil prices,” Go said. He stressed that escalating fuel prices directly affect food production and distribution, warning that neglecting primary producers could worsen the cost of basic commodities. RA 12316 establishes a legal framework allowing the government to temporarily suspend or reduce excise taxes on petroleum products during periods of sustained high global oil prices. Under the measure, the president may implement such adjustments upon the recommendation of the Development Budget Coordination Committee, in coordination with the Department of Energy, when the average Dubai crude oil price reaches or exceeds \$80 per barrel for one month, based on the Mean of Platts Singapore (MOPS). Go described the law as a crucial intervention tool for an economy vulnerable to external energy shocks. “The purpose of this law is to have an immediate mechanism to alleviate the impact of high oil prices on our countrymen. When the price of crude oil increases in the global market, it is immediately felt in the daily expenses of every Filipino,” he said. The law allows either full suspension or partial reduction of excise taxes, depending on prevailing economic conditions, and may apply to specific petroleum products. However, these measures are subject to strict safeguards. Any tax adjustment may only be implemented for a maximum of three months at a time, with limits set within a calendar year. The law also mandates the automatic reinstatement of original excise tax rates once global oil prices fall below the threshold or after the authorized period expires. The authority granted under RA 12316 remains valid until Dec. 31, 2028. “This is not just a tax cut. There is a clear basis for when it will be implemented and for how long. Its goal is to provide relief at the right time without affecting the overall balance of the economy,” Go explained.

- [Philippines urged to join ‘Board of Peace’](#) (2026-04-02 16:06)

THE Philippines risks falling off the global stage if it fails to engage with emerging international peace initiatives, a political analyst said. In an interview with The Manila Times, Carlos “Itos” Valdes cautioned that inaction could leave the country increasingly sidelined in key geopolitical discussions. Valdes urged the government to consider joining what he described as an emerging global “Board of Peace,” an initiative led by United States President Donald Trump. Valdes’

call comes amid reports that Trump had invited President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. to join the body. Philippine Ambassador to the US Jose Manuel “Babes” Romualdez confirmed that Trump sent Marcos a personal letter through the White House extending the invitation. Launched in late January, the Board of Peace already counts at least 26 founding member states. Valdes said the Philippines should seriously consider joining the initiative, which espouses negotiated settlements to conflicts. He argued that traditional multilateral institutions have proven ineffective in preventing wars. Joining such a group, he said, would allow the Philippines to safeguard its national interests while participating in ongoing global negotiations. “If you join the group that is working toward peace, then you are part of the process. Your interests are represented,” he said. Valdes argued that global alignments are shifting, with the US recalibrating its foreign policy. “The biggest risk is not joining the countries that are working for peace. If we are not part of that, we are outside,” he said. Noting the country’s declining international influence, he said the Philippines is no longer seen as a major player in global or regional affairs. “We are not being asked to cooperate. We are not part of major discussions. That is a national risk,” he said. Valdes warned that future leaders, particularly those eyeing the 2028 elections, will inherit the consequences of current foreign policy decisions, including whether the Philippines successfully integrates into emerging global alliances. “Whoever takes over in 2028 will be facing that,” he said, describing a potential scenario of a weakened and directionless state. Any shift in alignment should be guided by national interest, he said. “Every country should chart its own future, but it must also know where it stands in the world.”

- [Baste Duterte, Raffy Tulfo, Vico Sotto top picks in 2026 Senate race](#) (2026-04-02 16:05)

THE battle for the Senate in the 2026 midterm elections has narrowed to a three-way tie at the top between Davao City Mayor Sebastian “Baste” Duterte, Sen. Raffy Tulfo and Pasig City Mayor Vico Sotto. Each of them had a commanding 47 percent of voter preference, according to the latest preelection survey released by Arkipelago Analytics. The poll, conducted from Feb. 26 to March 6, had Duterte, Tulfo and Sotto in a statistical tie — setting the stage for what could become one of the most fiercely contested senatorial races in recent memory. The survey, which sampled 2,637 registered voters nationwide through face-to-face interviews, carries a margin of error of ± 2 percent at a 96-percent confidence level. Duterte, the son of former president Rodrigo Duterte, could run under the Hugpong ng Pagbabago (HNP) banner. He shared the top spot with broadcaster-turned-senator Raffy Tulfo, an independent, and Sotto, who is also without a party affiliation. Right behind the lead pack, a second tier of candidates posted 42 percent each: Sen. Robinhood Padilla, Sen. Loren Legarda (NPC) and former vice president Leni Robredo (LP). A third cluster followed closely with 39 percent: Sen. Alan Peter Cayetano (NP), Davao City Rep. Paolo “Pulong” Duterte (HNP) and Sen. Francis Escudero (NPC). The survey showed a fragmented field where name recall, regional strongholds and broadcast presence continue to shape voter preferences. Further down the list, a broad middle tier includes Sen. Mark Villar (NP), Sen. JV Ejercito, retired Commission on Elections (Comelec) commissioner Rowena Guanzon (IND), Education Secretary Sonny Angara, Makati City Mayor Nancy Binay and former senator Grace Poe (NPC) — all at 34 percent. Boxing icon Manny Pacquiao (PFP), Sen.

Jinggoy Estrada and popular television host Vice Ganda (IND) followed with 28 percent, while broadcaster Ben “Bitag” Tulfo (IND) and actor Dingdong Dantes (IND) had 25 percent. The survey also tracked candidates at the lower end of the preference spectrum. Former senator Antonio Trillanes IV (LP), former presidential spokesman Vic Rodriguez and former party-list representative Teddy Casiño (MKBYN) each garnered 7 percent. At the bottom were former Alliance of Concerned Teachers representative France Castro (MKBYN), Akbayan Party-list Rep. Chel Diokno, labor leader Ka Leody De Guzman, Presidential Communications Office Undersecretary Claire Castro, former Gabriela Party-list representative Liza Maza and pastor Apollo Quiboloy — each with 5 percent. Arkipelago Analytics said the survey’s sample was weighted to align with the Commission on Elections’ voter registration data, which lists 68.6 million voters. Regional weights were set at 11 percent for Metro Manila, 45 percent for Luzon outside the capital, 20 percent for the Visayas and 24 percent for Mindanao. The gender distribution mirrored Comelec figures at 51 percent female and 49 percent male. Socioeconomically, respondents were classified as 7 percent from Classes ABC, 75 percent from Class D and 18 percent from Class E, following standard Philippine consumer segmentation.

- [Priests urged to prioritize mental health](#) (2026-04-02 16:04)

CARDINAL Jose Fuerte Advincula, the archbishop of Manila, urged priests to look after their mental well-being, noting the prevalence of depression and anxiety among the clergy. Advincula said 18 percent, or about one in five Filipino Catholic priests are experiencing psychological distress or emotional burdens. “This is a concern we cannot ignore anymore, and we have to face it to resolve it,” Advincula said during the Chrism Mass at the Manila Cathedral on Maundy Thursday. Among the audience were priests from across the archdiocese renewing their commitment to service. Advincula laid out a three-step approach for priests to care for their mental health: recognize, reconnect, and renew. He urged priests to acknowledge their struggles and not hide their difficulties in shame or denial. “We need to acknowledge the signs and symptoms of difficulty so that they can be addressed. Or as mental health advocates often say, we have to name it to tame it. We have to feel it to heal it,” Advincula said. He reminded priests that it is not a failure to admit exhaustion, emotional burdens, or struggles in their prayer lives. Instead, he said, recognizing these signs is an affirmation of their humanity. “The danger is not that we grow tired, but that we refuse to recognize it. Because what is unrecognized cannot be offered to God, and what is not offered to God cannot be healed,” the cardinal said. Advincula noted that connection is essential for priests to maintain their mental and emotional health. He pointed out that even Jesus did not carry out his mission in isolation, but instead remained connected to his disciples and community. “In the priesthood, isolation can drain us, but communion will sustain us and heal us,” he said. Advincula called on priests to renew their sense of identity and mission in God. He reminded them that their worth is not defined by their work or achievements but by their identity as beloved sons of God. “We are not functionaries of an oppressive master. We are sons of a loving God. We are men who are anointed, chosen, and blessed by God,” the cardinal said. He stressed that renewal begins with an intimate relationship with God, who sustains them even in their darkest moments. Advincula

urged the public to pray for priests.

- [Phivolcs launches new platform for early warning, response](#) (2026-04-02 16:03)

THE Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs) has launched a new platform designed to be a unified system for early warning, disaster preparedness and response, Phivolcs chief Teresito Bacolcol said on Thursday. Called “Handa” (Ready), the platform was envisioned to be institutionalized as the country’s Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation (DRR-CCA) platform for early warning data and analytics, enhancing public awareness, strengthening planning and coordination mechanisms, and building more resilient communities nationwide, Bacolcol said. Science and Technology Secretary Renato Solidum Jr. said Handa was in response to President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.’s directive to establish a unified platform for early warning and disaster-related information. Developed under the Geospatial Analytics and Technology Solutions Program-Project 3, Handa reflects sustained multiagency collaboration and advances the integration of DRR-CCA into a unified geospatial and artificial intelligence (AI)-enabled platform, said Solidum, Phivolcs’ former director. Bacolcol said that Handa — powered by GeoRiskPH — integrates these capabilities into a unified system, ensuring informed decision-making across the phases of the disaster risk reduction management. Handa offers near real-time monitoring, location-based alerts, AI-assisted tools and interactive dashboards, according to Phivolcs, a Department of Science and Technology’s attached agency. “It visualizes geologic and hydro-meteorological hazards, as well as critical facilities, and integrates advisories and warnings to Phivolcs as well as from state weather bureau, and Mines and Geosciences Bureau of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources,” Bacolcol said. The platform also enables incident reporting to support response coordination and emergency operations, while users can report real-time incidents such as flooding, fires, road accidents or other on-ground emergencies. “In urgent situations, users can activate the Emergency SOS alert to share their location with responders. An AI-powered assistant chatbot provides access to hazard, weather and location-based safety information,” Bacolcol said.

- [DOLE boosts business continuity, job protection in IT-BPM sector](#) (2026-04-02 16:02)

THE Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) has enhanced its collaboration with the information technology and business process management (IT-BPM) industry to ensure business continuity, safeguard employment and maintain growth in the industry during the ongoing energy emergency. DOLE officer in charge Undersecretary Benedicto Ernesto Bitonio Jr. said the expanded engagement between the two parties was arrived at following a meeting with the IT & Business Process Association of the Philippines (Ibpap) and IT-BPM representatives. Bitonio said DOLE committed to protecting employment and welcomed support measures such as subsidized transportation and flexible work arrangements. The department, he said, is also strengthening social protection programs for workers affected by disruptions. DOLE and Ibpap committed to strengthening their partnership further to expand employment opportunities particularly for young workers, which includes maximizing job placement channels and ensuring that training programs meet current employer skill

requirements. Bitonio underscored the need for sector-wide business continuity planning to sustain operations and job creation in the face of existing and emerging challenges. DOLE is coordinating with other national agencies, the private sector and social organizations to improve its response to global uncertainties affecting jobs and workers. DOLE has set aside a P1.2-billion standby fund to protect the country's most vulnerable workers against the shock of global energy disruptions. At the core of DOLE's push were the Kabuhayan and Tulong Panghanapbuhay sa Ating Disadvantaged Workers (Tupad) emergency employment program and the DOLE Integrated Livelihood Program (DILP). Tupad offers emergency employment for displaced workers, enabling them to engage in community work for 10 to 30 days. The DILP gives vulnerable and marginalized workers access to resources, such as working capital in the form of raw materials, equipment, tools and jigs, to help them start, enhance or restore their livelihood. "These initiatives are being mobilized to support workers at risk of displacement as the energy crisis ripples across industries," Labor Secretary Bienvenido Laguesma said. In the first quarter of 2026, DOLE provided emergency employment through Tupad and livelihood assistance to 110,106 workers, with total disbursements reaching P753.69 million. The department is also working closely with agencies like the Department of Transportation, the Department of Social Welfare and Development, the Department of the Interior and Local Government, and local government units. Initial efforts will focus on transport workers to help maintain mobility and economic activity, with plans to extend assistance to sectors like agriculture and fisheries. Repatriated overseas Filipino workers were also getting focused attention, with DOLE coordinating with the Department of Migrant Workers and the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration in lining up job matching, skills training through Technical Education and Skills Development Authority, and livelihood assistance. On the jobs front, DOLE has conducted 144 job fairs nationwide, connecting jobseekers, from fresh graduates to displaced workers, with new opportunities. All 16 regional wage boards have issued adjustments for the 2025–2026 cycle, with the latest increase in Bicol set to take effect on April 8. DOLE will also convene the National Tripartite Industrial Peace Council to craft stronger, coordinated strategies in response to the energy emergency, said Laguesma.

- [National Maritime Council condemns China for directing fire control radar to a PH Navy warship](#) (2026-04-02 14:54)

MANILA, Philippines - The National Maritime Council on (NMC) Thursday expressed condemnation of the recent incidents involving Chinese maritime forces and against Philippine vessels and fisherfolk in the West Philippine Sea (WPS) calling it "aggressive and dangerous." Last March 7, a People's Liberation Army (PLA) Navy warship directed its fire control radar at BRP Miguel Malvar near Escoda Shoal during a lawful routine patrol. Only days later on March 17, Filipino fisherfolk at Bajo de Masinloc were harassed by Chinese vessels, sirens and deployment of Rigid Hull Inflatable Boats interfering with lawful fishing activities. On March 26, a Philippine Navy vessel avoided collision after a PLA Navy warship made unsafe maneuver near Pagasa Island. "These incidents occurred in areas where the Philippines has sovereignty, sovereign rights and jurisdiction. Philippine operations in these areas are lawful and consistent

with the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and the 2016 Arbitral Award. On the other hand, the activities of China in these areas are inconsistent with international law and the 2002 Declaration of the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea,” the NMC said in a statement. The NMC said the Philippine will undertake appropriate diplomatic actions and engage in existing bilateral dialogue mechanisms to address such concerns. The Philippines, NMC said, also reiterates its call to China to “withdraw and direct its vessels and maritime assets to cease and desist from illegal, provocative and dangerous actions against Philippine vessels and to stop activities that violate Philippine sovereignty, sovereign rights and jurisdiction and to comply with its obligations under international law.”

- [Most wanted for rape in Quezon City nabbed - PNP](#) (2026-04-02 14:32)

MANILA, Philippines - A district-level Most Wanted Person was arrested during an operation conducted on March 31 along Malvar Street, Barangay Bagumbuhay, Project 4, Quezon City, the Philippine National Police (PNP) said on Thursday. Operatives from the District Special Operations Unit of the Quezon City Police District carried out the arrest by virtue of a Warrant of Arrest for six counts of Qualified Rape of a Minor under. The court recommended no bail for the accused, who is now under police custody for proper legal proceedings. The operation highlights the sustained efforts of the PNP in tracking down wanted persons involved in heinous crimes. It also reflects the continuing implementation of the PNP Focused Agenda—a strategic framework of transformation designed to make police service more responsive and accountable. Among its key priorities, Enhanced Managing Police Operations remains crucial in ensuring the effective pursuit and arrest of fugitives, particularly those charged with serious offenses, and in reinforcing the swift administration of justice. PGEN Nartatez emphasized, “We will continue to run after individuals who attempt to evade justice, especially those accused of grave offenses. No matter how long it takes, the law will catch up with them.” He further stated, “Operations like this reinforce our commitment to protect the most vulnerable members of society and uphold the rule of law with determination.” He also said, “Tungkulin naming siguraduhin na ligtas ang komunidad, lalo na ang mga kabataan. Ang sinumang lumabag sa batas ay pananagutin namin.”

- [QC mayor takes pride of PDL-made bags showcased at 5-star resort and casino](#) (2026-04-02 13:51)

MANILA, Philippines – Quezon City Mayor Joy Belmonte on Thursday took pride as she led in promoting the handcrafted bags made by women - Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDLs) particularly from the City Jail Female Dormitory (CJFD). Belmonte also hailed the partnership between the local government and Solaire Resort North, located in Barangay Pag-asa, also in the city, where the bags made by PDLs were being showcased. “The initiative opens new doors for women from CJFD, giving their products prime exposure in a high-end commercial space and connecting them to a wider market,” she said. Led by CJFD in collaboration with the city’s Small Business and Cooperatives Development and Promotions Office (SBCDP) and Quezon City University, the project transforms skill and creativity into real economic opportunity, according

to the local government. Since launching, the partnership has already generated over ₱100,000 in sales as of February 2026—directly supporting participating PDLs and their families, the SBCDP said. The city chief executive cited the impact of the initiative, which aligns with the city’s ‘No Woman Left Behind’ program. “This is what second chances look like. By bringing their craftsmanship to a wider audience, we are helping women rebuild their confidence, support their families, and prepare for life beyond detention,” Belmonte said. More than a showcase, the partnership is a powerful statement on inclusion, dignity, and hope—proving that with the right opportunities, lives can be rebuilt and futures reimaged, the city government said. She stressed that the city continues to champion innovative pathways for rehabilitation, empowering even the most vulnerable sectors to thrive.

- [LTFRB penalizes taxi driver in Cebu for alleged overcharging of K-pop artist](#) (2026-04-02 13:36)

MANILA, Philippines —The Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB) has ordered the impounding of a taxi unit and the filing of criminal charges against the driver and operator accused of overcharging a South Korean K-pop artist in Cebu. LTFRB Chairman Vigor Mendoza II said the agency was `drafting a new policy that would allow the immediate filing of criminal cases and impounding of taxis involved in overcharging incidents, following a string of complaints from commuters. The case involving the viral complaint of TXT member Soobin will serve as the test case for the proposed policy, Mendoza said. The incident, which occurred during the artist’s visit to Cebu last month, drew widespread attention after a video showed the taxi driver allegedly charging higher fares than agreed. The initial fare of ₱350 reportedly increased to ₱500, with the driver later insisting on a ₱1,000 payment, citing the use of “special fuel.” The video quickly gained traction online, drawing millions of views and prompting criticism over the treatment of foreign visitors. Authorities said the case also led to the discovery of similar complaints involving other international performers and foreign passengers. Mendoza said he has directed the LTFRB Regional Office in Central Visayas to identify the driver and operator involved and locate the taxi unit for immediate impoundment. “We will file criminal charges for violations of public service laws and estafa,” he said, adding that administrative sanctions will also be pursued, including the possible revocation of the operator’s franchise. The LTFRB will also coordinate with the Land Transportation Office for the revocation of the driver’s license, Mendoza added. The taxi unit will remain impounded pending the outcome of the case. He stressed that combining criminal prosecution with administrative penalties would become the new standard in dealing with erring taxi drivers. “Enough is enough,” Mendoza said, noting that such incidents damage the country’s image and undermine efforts to promote safe and reliable public transportation.

- [P15.75-M smuggled cigarettes seized in Masbate](#) (2026-04-02 13:29)

MANILA, Philippines - Over ₱15 million worth of smuggled cigarettes were intercepted by authorities on March 31 at Pinamarbuan Port, Barangay Pinamarbuan, Mobo, Masbate, the Philippine National Police (PNP) said on Thursday. The operation, led by the Mobo Municipal

Police Station (MPS), the Police Investigation Unit of the Masbate Police Provincial Office (PPO), and the Regional Mobile Force Battalion 5, resulted in the arrest of two suspects. Authorities discovered a 10-wheeler truck loaded with 630 boxes of assorted cigarette brands without proper documentation. The seized goods and the suspects were brought to the Mobo MPS for proper disposition. “This operation is a clear reminder that illegal trade will not be tolerated, and we are committed to protecting lawful business and public welfare,” PNP chief PGen. Jose Melencio Nartatez Jr. said. “Our commitment is to protect public interest while ensuring that those who defraud the government face the consequences. Pinahahalagahan namin ang kabuhayan ng ating mga mamamayan, kaya mahigpit naming ipinapatupad ang batas laban sa mga nagbebenta ng ilegal na produkto,” Nartatez added.

- [CBCP: No smoking in churches](#) (2026-04-02 13:15)

MANILA, Philippines— The Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) Healthcare Commission reminded the public that smoking within church premises is a form of “disrespect.” In a statement released Thursday, CBCP Healthcare Commission Executive Secretary Fr. Dan Cancino urged parishes to enforce stricter bans on smoking as they prepare for an influx of visitors during Holy Week. He emphasized that such habits pose significant public health risks. “These habits pose serious threats to both individuals and the community as a whole, leading to preventable diseases, premature deaths, and immense suffering for families. I hope that all our parishes and communities strictly enforce smoke-free and vape-free policies in accordance with existing laws,” he said.

- [Advincula: Chaos in world today rooted in lack of love for God, others](#) (2026-04-02 10:28)

MANILA, Philippines — Manila Archbishop Jose Cardinal Advincula urged Filipino Catholics to live out the teachings of Jesus Christ by turning away from pride and embracing humility. In his homily at the Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper at the Manila Cathedral on Thursday, Advincula said the ongoing global conflict stemmed from the lack of love from God and others, calling on the faithful to “wash the feet of those in need.” “The chaos that is happening in our world today is rooted in the lack of love for God and for others. What prevails is arrogance, cruelty, and a lack of respect for each other,” Advincula said. He added that instead of seeking ways to compromise and understand, many resorted to destroying others. He urged the public to illuminate the lives of people around them and serve as a bridge of compassion, emphasizing that their true weapon is the word of God. “The word of God, who humbled himself and became man, teaches us how to be human and to relate to others... May we all be instruments of God's good news,” he said.

- [Iran to allow PH oil shipments through Strait of Hormuz](#) (2026-04-02 09:54)

(UPDATE) MANILA, Philippines — The Philippines said Thursday that Iran has pledged to allow safe passage for shipments of oil to the import-dependent archipelago through the Strait of Hormuz. President Ferdinand Marcos last week declared a state of national energy emergency, saying “nothing was off the table” as the country of 116 million tries to navigate a global fuel

crisis driven by the Middle East war. Fuel prices have hit historic highs in the Philippines since treaty ally the United States and Israel launched strikes on Iran on February 28, with Tehran effectively closing the vital Strait of Hormuz to traffic since. On Thursday, the Philippine Department of Foreign Affairs said a "productive phone conversation" between Foreign Secretary Theresa Lazaro and her Iranian counterpart had opened the door to crucial oil shipments. "The Iranian Foreign Minister assured the Secretary that Iran will allow the safe, unhindered, and expeditious passage through the Strait of Hormuz of Philippine-flagged vessels, energy sources, and all Filipino seafarers," the Department of Foreign Affairs said in a statement. The Philippines imports the majority of its energy requirements from the Middle East with the move ensuring "the steady delivery of critical oil and fertilizer supplies to the Philippines" the ministry added. Lazaro said in a post to X the call had reached a "positive understanding on the safety of our seafarers and the security of our energy supply". A day earlier, Lazaro met with Iran's ambassador in Manila to seek the formal designation of the Philippines as a "non-hostile country." US President Donald Trump said Thursday that the United States was "very close" to achieving its objectives while simultaneously threatening to bomb Iran "back to the Stone Ages" over the next two to three weeks. In a report to the Philippine stock exchange this week, the operator of the country's sole oil refinery, said it had agreed to purchase Russian crude after seeing at least four million barrels in shipments cancelled since the start of the war. Its purchase of around 2.5 million barrels of Russian crude had been made out of "extreme necessity", the report from Petron Corp said. AFP had previously reported that a tanker filled with Russian crude oil had arrived at the harbor servicing Petron's refinery, a purchase unthinkable before the United States eased sanctions tied to Moscow's war in Ukraine. The Philippines' announcement of an accord with Iran comes just days after neighboring Malaysia said its tankers would be permitted to pass through the Strait of Hormuz without paying any toll to Tehran.

- [DepEd to hold orientation sessions on three-term school calendar shift](#) (2026-04-02 07:30)

MANILA, Philippines — The Department of Education (DepEd) will conduct a series of orientation sessions to school leaders, teachers, and education stakeholders on the implementation of the three-term school calendar beginning school year 2026-2027. In a statement on Wednesday night, DepEd said that the shift formed part of its broader effort to improve the quality of basic education, strengthen institutional planning, and ensure that schools are better supported in delivering the K to 12 curriculum. The briefings, according to DepEd, will cover policies and operational adjustments related to the shift, including Assessment and Grading, Lesson Planning, Education in Emergencies (EiE), Flexible Learning Programs (FLP), and Strengthened Senior High School (SSHS) Work Immersion. The orientation will begin later this month after the issuance of relevant policies starting with the regional and division officials and school heads, while orientation sessions for master teachers and classroom teachers will be conducted in May. The Department of Economy, Planning and Development's (DepDev) has approved the implementation of the three-term school calendar, with the aim of maximizing the length of learning time often disrupted by bad weather as well as celebrations and observances.

- [Russia expresses 'readiness' to help Asean with its energy needs](#) (2026-04-02 07:23)

MANILA, Philippines — Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Viktorovich Lavrov assured envoys from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) of Russia's "readiness" to help the 11-member regional bloc address their oil crisis triggered by the Middle East war. The Philippine Embassy in Russia shared this information following Lavrov's recent meeting with Asean envoys led by Philippine Ambassador to Moscow Igor Bailen. Bailen, chairman of the Asean Moscow Committee (AMC), led fellow Asean ambassadors in the annual working luncheon hosted for AMC by Lavrov. The embassy said Lavrov exchanged views with the ambassadors on the developments in the Middle East. He articulated Russia's position and its efforts to find solutions that may be acceptable to all sides. Lavrov also assured them of Russia's "readiness to help Asean with its immediate energy requirements, including oil," the embassy posted on Facebook over the weekend. He also reiterated Russia's support for Asean centrality, including through Asean-Russia mechanisms, in building a stable security and cooperation architecture in the Asia-Pacific region, based on respect for international law, equality, and openness, it added. Bailen shared with Lavrov updates on the Philippines' chairmanship of ASEAN ahead of the 48th and 49th ASEAN Summits later this year. He also mentioned the 50th anniversary commemoration of the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia, to which Russia has been a high contracting party since 2004, the year Lavrov assumed his current position. The embassy said Russia and Asean look forward to the adoption of their 2026-2030 Plan of Action, which is currently being finalized by their diplomatic missions in Jakarta. "The document will seek to enhance their strategic partnership across a wide range of areas, including countering common challenges and threats, trade and investment, high-tech and knowledge-intensive industries, digitalization, energy, and the expansion of business and youth contacts," the embassy said. Under the theme of "Navigating Our Future, Together," the Philippines as ASEAN chairman is committed to lead ASEAN's community-building efforts by focusing on peace and security anchors, prosperity corridors and people empowerment, while also sustaining ASEAN's tradition of engagement with external partners all over the world, including the Russian Federation, it added. Both sides affirmed their mutually-beneficial relationship, particularly in light of this year's 35th anniversary commemoration of ASEAN-Russia relations, the embassy said.

- [Marcos reminds Filipinos of selfless service on Maundy Thursday](#) (2026-04-02 07:06)

MANILA, Philippines — President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. reminded Filipinos of the importance of selfless service as the nation observes Maundy Thursday. "On this Holy Thursday, we are reminded that leadership begins with service. Caring for others and putting their needs before our own," he said in a message posted across his social media accounts. The chief executive likewise called on every citizen to practice selfless acts even after the Holy Week. "May we carry this spirit with us in all that we do," he said. Maundy Thursday commemorates Jesus Christ's last supper with his disciples. It is also the day Filipinos practice Visita Iglesia, a Lenten tradition of visiting churches to reflect on the Passion of Christ.

- [PH Embassy in Mexico sends food, basic needs to distressed Filipinos in Cuba](#) (2026-04-02 06:53)

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippine Embassy in Mexico, through its Assistance-to-Nationals section, sent food and medicines to Filipinos in Havana as Cuba reeled from the economic crisis caused by the United States' fuel blockade on the island. The embassy has jurisdiction over Belize, Costa Rica, Cuba, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama, and Dominican Republic. The United Nations in February warned of potential humanitarian “collapse” in Cuba, following Washington’s attempt to block oil supplies from reaching the island. There are 27 Filipinos as of June 2019. The embassy last March 21, 2026 sent a total of 120 kilograms of care packages containing basic goods, hygiene kits and medicines. “They were distributed to Filipinos in Cuba who have been affected by the ongoing oil crisis and economic challenges in the country,” the embassy posted on Facebook. The beneficiaries “conveyed their utmost appreciation to the Philippine government for the timely assistance, emphasizing that such support reassures them that they are not forgotten, especially in times of crisis,” the embassy said. The Philippines closed down its embassy in Havana on Oct. 12, 2012. Manila and Havana were supposed to celebrate 70 years of diplomatic ties on July 4, 2016. Back then, Cuba was under the jurisdiction of the Philippine Embassy in Washington DC. The welfare assistance was made possible through the support provided by the Department of Foreign Affairs-Office of the Undersecretary for Migration Affairs. The European Commission has released an additional €2 million or over \$2.3 million in humanitarian aid to Cuba in view of the worsening humanitarian conditions there, the Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO) said. The BBC reported on Tuesday that a Russian-owned tanker carrying about 730,000 barrels of crude oil had docked on the northern coast of Cuba, ending a near-total fuel blockade by the US on the island. President Donald Trump last week said that he had “no problem” with sending fuel to Cuba, which has experienced a series of blackouts due to chronic fuel shortages and aging infrastructure. The fund will “contribute to provide logistics support to humanitarian partners delivering urgent relief to the most vulnerable, due to the current energy crisis and related difficulties on the distribution of food and drinking water,” the ECHO said on Wednesday. “This funding adds to the €4 million already approved earlier this year as a regional allocation for the Caribbean, which has been dedicated mainly to address increasing needs in Cuba,” the ECHO said in a statement. It also follows the assistance provided last year after hurricane Melissa caused extensive damage in the island. In 2025, a total of nearly €6 million was mobilized for disaster preparedness and emergency response in Cuba.

- [Shelter 'sets record straight' on girl's viral post to president](#) (2026-04-02 05:06)

MANILA, Philippines — A non-profit organization that has been sheltering an 11-year-old girl, whose appeal for help to President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. had gone viral, sought to clarify some “misinformation” surrounding some of the events that she pointed out in her story that was contained in a speech she delivered during her graduation recently. The Redeemer Homeless Mission, through lawyer Mary Joy Lumbria Acobera, said the girl, identified only as Maureen, and all children in the shelter area were safe and in good condition. The controversy stemmed

from an open letter the girl read during her graduation ceremony recently where she sought protection and redress from sexual and other forms of abuse allegedly perpetrated by a barangay kagawad (village councilor) and his sons. She then walked out of her graduation ceremony to submit a petition to the vice mayor of Tinambac, calling for the removal of the local official. Acobera said that the administration and teachers of the Caloco Elementary School, where the girl was studying, “had no prior knowledge of Maureen’s decision to walk out of her graduation ceremony.” “School Head Harrison Belleca and Ma’am Michelle Daliva-Ocampo were likewise unaware of the portions of her speech where she intended to call out the injustices and where she sought permission to walk out,” Acobera said in a statement on Wednesday. Acobera also clarified that the girl did not walk home alone but was joined by her older sister who read the Bible in a prayer walk to the local government of Tinambac. Acobera also “set the record straight” after the girl recounted how her peer, reportedly a child with special needs, “got pregnant from the first rape” and how the village councilor “kidnapped” her and took her to Montalban for an abortion.” “The accused in the rape case has been in detention as the matter is pending before the court of law. Maureen’s prayer walk was not solely for this specific incident; it was a stand against the impunity of a public official attempting to intimidate and silence the residents of Caloco,” Acobera said. Acobera extended the shelter’s gratitude to the president for his swift response and action that was carried out by the Philippine National Police, Armed Forces of the Philippines, Department of Social Welfare and Development, Department of the Interior and Local Government and Tinambac Municipal Mayor Edward Albert “Bobit” P. Prades.

- [Bill of rights for air travelers pushed at House](#) (2026-04-02 03:36)

MANILA, Philippines — Bagong Henerasyon Partylist Rep. Robert Nazal is pushing for the institutionalization of the existing Air Passengers Bill of Rights that will guarantee clear, enforceable rights for Filipino air travelers amid the rapid growth of the aviation sector. House Bill 245 seeks to strengthen the existing Civil Aeronautics Board (CAB) policies and strengthen its current protections. “This bill says a plane ticket is not just a receipt. It is a contract, and the Filipino passenger must receive the service, dignity, and remedies that the law guarantees,” Nazal said in a statement. He noted the sharp rebound in air travel following the Coronavirus pandemic, noting that passenger volume has reached 27.3 million in 2023, underscoring the urgency of ensuring that passenger protections keep pace with industry growth. “As air travel in the Philippines continues to recover and expand, passenger rights must keep pace with growth,” Nazal added. He said that while existing policies, as provided under the current Air Passenger Bill of Rights, outline passenger entitlements, these remain scattered unevenly enforced. The proposed measure, Nazal said, consolidated and strengthened these protections into a single statutory framework. Under the bill, passengers are guaranteed the right to full and transparent information on fares and conditions, the right to receive the full value of services paid for, and the right to timely assistance, compensation or rebooking in cases of delays, cancellations or denied boarding. It also mandates clear procedures for handling complaints and claims, imposes minimum service standards, and prescribes penalties for violations

- [Cardinal urges clergy to prioritize mental health amid rising distress cases](#) (2026-04-02 02:46)

MANILA, Philippines — A Cardinal urged Filipino priests to prioritize their mental health, citing a growing number of priests experiencing depression and anxiety and stressing the need for greater awareness and support within the Church. Speaking during the Chrism Mass at the Manila Cathedral on Maundy Thursday—where priests from across the archdiocese gather to renew their commitment to service and their promises—Advincula said 18 percent, or 1 in 5, priests are were experiencing psychological distress or emotional burden. “This is a concern we cannot ignore anymore,” Advincula said.

- [Prohibited items — from live ammunition to firearm magazines — seized in airports nationwide](#) (2026-04-02 02:41)

MANILA, Philippines — The Office for Transportation Security (OTS) has reported that several prohibited items were intercepted, including live ammunition and firearm magazines, in airports nationwide. At the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA) Terminal 3, screening officers held an American passenger bound for San Francisco after a live bullet was found in his carry-on bag. Other items seized at the same terminal were: - Two pieces of ammunition from a Tagbilaran-bound passenger. - A piece of ammunition from a traveler bound for Kalibo. - An empty shell from a passenger bound for Roxas City. - An amulet made from an ammunition shell from a Taipei-bound traveler. At NAIA Terminal 2, another empty shell was confiscated from a passenger on flight Z2-329 to Tacloban. The OTS also reported seizing prohibited items from passengers at airports outside of NAIA. In Cotabato, a magazine loaded with four live bullets was seized, while an empty shell was discovered hidden in a carry-on bag in Dipolog. Additionally, a Manila-bound passenger from Roxas City was found with two firearm magazines. Although the items were confiscated, authorities allowed all involved passengers to board their flights for humanitarian reasons.

- [Pasig processes unserved PUJ drivers for cash assistance](#) (2026-04-02 02:35)

MANILA, Philippines — The Pasig City government has processed more than 1,000 traditional and modern public utility jeepney drivers who were left out of the initial distribution of the national government’s cash relief assistance. The city government said the local registration and data validation were conducted to help unserved drivers qualify for a special payout under the Assistance to Individuals in Crisis Situation program of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD). The activity was held on Monday and Tuesday, March 30 and 31, through the City Transportation Development and Management Office. Pasig said the effort covered drivers who did not receive the P5,000 cash relief assistance distributed on March 25. A total of 1,024 individuals were processed and included in the initial list prepared by the local government. Of the total, 853 personally went to Maybunga Rainforest Park for registration and profiling. Another 171 members of transport cooperatives under the Pasig City Cooperative Development Office were included without having to undergo profiling. After the registration and profiling, the CTDMO, City Social Welfare and Development Office, and Cooperative

Development Office carried out joint deduplication and data cleaning with the DSWD and the Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board. The city government said the process was meant to validate the information submitted and remove duplicate entries from both the Pasig masterlist and the national list. The initial list for Pasig has been submitted to the national government for the finalization of beneficiaries. Pasig said the schedule for the special payout for PUJ and MPUJ drivers in the city would be announced once the final list was completed.

- [De Lima pushes service contracting for PUVs](#) (2026-04-02 02:31)

MANILA, Philippines — Mamamayang Liberal Parylist Rep. Leila de Lima pushed to strengthen and expand the service contracting program for public transport to provide stable income for drivers while ensuring reliable and efficient service for commuters amid the continuing rise in fuel prices. In her House Resolution 913 filed on March 30, the senior deputy minority leader at the House of Representatives urged the Departments of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) and Transportation (DOTr) and the Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB) to study the public transport service contracting program and address any implementation gaps and operational challenges. She also sought to ensure inclusive participation in the program across transport sectors and recommend appropriate policy and legislative measures for its sustainable and efficient nationwide implementation. In a statement, de Lima said that many drivers have stopped their services due to the high costs of gasoline. "While some PUV (Public Utility Vehicle) drivers are still taking the risk, every trip comes with the heavy fear of either going into debt or earning next to nothing. This worsening oil price crisis is truly a heavy cross to bear," de Lima said. She said that the current situation "necessitates proactive measures from the government to help our public transport sectors, and service contracting has already been identified as a sustainable subsidy mechanism that supports transport operators and commuters alike." Under the program, drivers received compensation based on actual kilometer run and performance incentives, in accordance with LTFRB guidelines.

- [PH condemns latest China aggression in West Philippine Sea](#) (2026-04-02 02:23)

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippine government on Thursday condemned the recent "aggressive and dangerous actions" by Chinese maritime forces against Philippine vessels, aircraft, and Filipino fisherfolk in the West Philippine Sea, saying these incidents "endanger lives, violate international law, and undermine regional peace and stability." In a statement, the National Maritime Council (NMC) said these "unlawful acts" by the China Coast Guard (CCG), the People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN), the Chinese Maritime Militia, and other Chinese maritime forces occurred in areas where the Philippines has sovereignty, sovereign rights, and jurisdiction. "Philippine operations in these areas are lawful and consistent with the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and the 2016 Arbitral Award," the NMC said. "On the other hand, the activities of China in these areas are inconsistent with international law and the 2002 Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC)," it added.

- [Phivolcs launches platform for ‘preparedness, early warning and response’](#) (2026-04-02 02:16)

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs) launched a new platform designed to be a unified system for early warning, disaster preparedness and response, its chief, Teresito Bacolcol, said on Thursday. Called "Handa" (Ready), it was envisioned to be institutionalized as the country's Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation (DRR-CCA) platform for early warning data and analytics, enhancing public awareness, strengthening planning and coordination mechanisms, and building more resilient communities nationwide, Bacolcol said. Department of Science and Technology (DOST) Secretary Renato Solidum Jr. said the development of this platform was in response to President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.'s directive to establish a unified platform for early warning and disaster-related information. Developed under the Geospatial Analytics and Technology Solutions (GATES) Program - Project 3, Handa reflects sustained multi-agency collaboration and advances the integration of DRR-CCA into a unified geospatial and artificial intelligence (AI)-enabled platform, said Solidum, Phivolcs' former director. Bacolcol said that Handa - powered by GeoRiskPH - integrates these capabilities into a unified system for preparedness, early warning, and response, ensuring informed decision-making across the phases of the disaster risk reduction management. Handa offers near real-time monitoring, location-based alerts, AI-assisted tools, and interactive dashboards, according to Phivolcs, DOST's attached agency. "It visualizes geologic and hydro-meteorological hazards, as well as critical facilities, and integrates advisories and warnings Phivolcs as well as from state weather bureau and Mines and Geosciences Bureau of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources," Bacolcol said. The platform also enables incident reporting to support response coordination and emergency operations while users can report real-time incidents such as flooding, fires, road accidents, or other on-the-ground emergencies, helping authorities respond more effectively, Phivolcs said. "In urgent situations, users can activate the Emergency SOS alert to share their location with responders. An AI-powered assistant chatbot provides access to hazard, weather, and location-based safety information," Bacolcol stressed. The new system is expected to encourage community participation by allowing citizens to report incidents, share on-the-ground observations, and actively contribute to situational awareness and response efforts, the top officials said.

- [Trust in govt drops as pessimism grows](#) (2026-04-01 16:18)

(UPDATE) PUBLIC trust and approval ratings for the country's top leaders declined further in the first quarter of 2026, reflecting growing dissatisfaction and pessimism amid economic uncertainty and governance concerns, the latest Pahayag survey by PUBLiCUS Asia Inc. showed. The nationwide poll, conducted from March 21 to 24 among 1,509 registered voters, shows eroding confidence across key officials, even as broader public sentiment turns increasingly pessimistic. Marcos, Duterte ratings slide President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.'s approval rating dropped to 19 percent, down from 22 percent in the previous quarter, while his trust rating fell to 13 percent. Respondents cited three main issues behind the decline: perceived

failure to ensure accountability in flood control controversies, backlash over developments involving former president Rodrigo Duterte and the International Criminal Court, and dissatisfaction with rising fuel prices Vice President Sara Duterte, while still the highest-rated among top officials, also posted significant declines. Her approval rating fell to 28 percent (from 34 percent), and trust dropped to 26 percent (from 31 percent). Her numbers were weighed down by impeachment complaints, political tensions and developments linked to the ICC case involving her father. Senate President Vicente Sotto III showed relative stability but recorded slight declines, with approval at 23 percent and trust at 14 percent. House Speaker Faustino Dy III continued to struggle with low public visibility, posting 11 percent approval and 6-percent trust ratings. Chief Justice Alexander Gesmundo registered a mixed trend, with approval falling to 16 percent while trust remained relatively steady at 10 percent. Public pessimism surges The decline in leadership ratings comes alongside a sharp rise in public pessimism. Seventy-four percent of Filipinos now express a negative outlook for the coming quarter, up from 58 percent previously. Half of the respondents describe the country's current condition as weak, while only 23 percent see it as strong. Nearly half (48 percent) believe the country is heading in the wrong direction. Economic anxiety intensifies Expectations for the national economy deteriorated markedly. A majority (56 percent) now anticipates further decline in the next quarter, a sharp increase from the previous survey period. At the household level, financial anxiety is deepening, with 36 percent respondents expecting their personal finances to worsen compared with last year. Overall optimism has dropped significantly, with only 23 percent expecting an improvement. At the household level, concern is rising, with 36 percent anticipating worsening personal finances — more than double last year's figure. Corruption, cost of living Corruption remains the top concern, cited by 20 percent of respondents, alongside reported experiences of graft in public offices. Economic pressures are also widespread, including rising fuel prices, difficulty affording basic goods, and insufficient wages and unmet needs. These point to a crisis in governance and the economy shaping public sentiment. Service agencies Frontline government agencies continued to perform better in public perception. The Technical Education and Skills Development Authority led in both approval (65 percent) and trust (45 percent), followed by the Department of Science and Technology, and the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas. In contrast, institutions associated with politics and infrastructure, such as the Department of Public Works and Highways and the House of Representatives of the Philippines, posted the lowest ratings. Half of the respondents disapproved of Cabinet members' overall performance, indicating continued dissatisfaction with the administration. Opposition figures in the Senate performed relatively well in public perception. Sen. Bam Aquino posted the highest net favorable rating, followed by Senators Francis Pangilinan and Risa Hontiveros. In contrast, strongly negative sentiment was recorded for Senators Jinggoy Estrada, Camille Villar, Ronald Dela Rosa and Mark Villar. Strong support for reform, transparency Across policy issues, Filipinos overwhelmingly support tax relief measures, greater transparency in infrastructure spending and political reforms, such as banning dynasties. Respondents were divided, however, on membership in the International Criminal Court, same-sex property rights and impeachment-related actions.

- [Palace says Ombudsman, DOJ swamped by flood control cases](#) (2026-04-01 16:16)

(UPDATE) THE Department of Justice (DOJ) and the Office of the Ombudsman are overwhelmed by the volume of cases referred by the Independent Commission for Infrastructure (ICI), Malacañang said Wednesday, a day after the panel ceased its operations. Palace Press Officer Claire Castro issued the statement after various groups have expressed dissatisfaction with the fact-finding body's probe, saying it failed to hold accountable the big fish behind the flood control scam. In a radio interview, Castro said the ICI, which concluded its operations on March 31, has already submitted its findings to the proper authorities, including referrals involving dozens of individuals linked to questionable infrastructure projects. "The ICI is just a fact-finding committee. They are not the ones who will hold the big fish accountable. They were tasked only to gather information, facts, testimonies that can be submitted directly to the investigating bodies, like the DOJ and also the Ombudsman," Castro said. "The filing of cases rests with the Ombudsman and DOJ," she added. Castro said the volume of referrals has placed pressure on investigating bodies, which were now conducting preliminary investigations. "Because of the sheer volume of the referrals, the Ombudsman and DOJ are seemingly overwhelmed," she said. Reiterating ICI chairman Andres Reyes Jr.'s remarks, the Palace official said the ICI has fulfilled its mandate and issuing an executive order to abolish the body was unnecessary. She reiterated that no one would be spared in the flood control probe. "Many are engaging in drama before the media. What we need is evidence that will serve as the basis for the prosecution of those involved," Castro said. "Stop the drama. We have to start working." "The ICI did not sleep, did not rest and did not relax. All of the recommendations, those who were charged and those for further investigation, are now in the hands of the DOJ and Ombudsman," she added. During its six-month investigation, the ICI endorsed cases implicating at least 65 individuals, including lawmakers and contractors.

- [Philippines eyes 'deepening cooperation' with Iran on energy](#) (2026-04-01 16:15)

(UPDATE) THE Philippines is committed to "deepening cooperation" with Iran, particularly on energy, Manila's foreign secretary said on Wednesday as the import-dependent archipelago jockeys with other regional countries for desperately needed oil. The price of fuel has hit historic highs in the Philippines since treaty ally the United States and Israel launched strikes on Iran on Feb. 28, with the war forcing the partial closure of the vital Strait of Hormuz. President Ferdinand Marcos declared a state of national energy emergency last week, later saying that "nothing was off the table" as the country of 116 million tried to meet its need for fuel. Foreign Secretary Theresa Lazaro said in a post on social media platform X on Wednesday that she had explored "key avenues of operation" in a meeting with Iranian Ambassador Yousef Esmailzadeh that also included Energy Secretary Sharon Garin. "Building on the momentum of our Political Consultations last November 2025, we are committed to deepening our cooperation across all fronts, particularly energy cooperation," she said of the meeting. The Foreign Affairs department offered no further details of the meeting, but it comes just days after Malaysia announced its tankers would be permitted to pass through the Strait of Hormuz without paying any toll to Iran. The Iranian Embassy in Manila declined to comment on

the meeting. A stock exchange filing on Monday revealed that the Philippines' sole oil refinery had secured nearly 2.5 million barrels of Russian crude out of "extreme necessity." Agence France-Presse (AFP) had previously reported that a tanker filled with Russian crude oil had arrived at the harbor servicing refinery operator Petron Corp., a purchase unthinkable before the United States eased sanctions tied to Moscow's war in Ukraine.

- [Maundy Thursday: A day of inclusivity, forgiveness](#) (2026-04-01 16:14)

MAUNDY Thursday marks one of the most important moments in Christianity, commemorating Jesus Christ's Last Supper with His apostles. The day also marks the start of the Triduum — the three sacred days that commemorate Christ's passion, death and resurrection through various traditions. One of those traditions is the Washing of the Feet, where priests imitate Jesus by washing the feet of their disciples. According to Luke 22:21, despite knowing Judas Iscariot's betrayal of Jesus by selling Him for 30 pieces of silver, Jesus still welcomed him to His last supper, saying, "But behold, the hand of him that betrayeth me is with me on the table." In his homily at the Manila Cathedral, Fr. Viel Bautista emphasized that, even in the face of betrayal, Jesus underscored the importance of forgiveness and reconciliation. "For Jesus, even those plotting to kill Him, even those in a little while will be leaving Him off when He suffered, even those who would deny Him, He still offers a table to dine and to be reconciled," he said. He added that Jesus' actions reflect inclusivity, especially toward those who may feel distant from their faith. "In the many ways we turn away from the Lord, He will continue, and He will endlessly offer a table for us," Bautista said. Ironically, for many Filipinos, the day also marks a time for family reunions, as it is observed as a regular holiday. Bautista urged the faithful that as they see their families once again, they are reminded of the Last Supper and God's unwavering love and desire to heal broken relationships. "For the many times we have also planned, prepared and executed our betrayals and of us turning away from Jesus, He offers a table... where He will be there and will be able to say to us, 'I welcome you, I forgive you and I wish to strengthen you,' " Bautista concluded.

- [El Nido earns spot in BBC's top global beach destinations](#) (2026-04-01 16:13)

(UPDATE) EL Nido is among the BBC's list of world's eight best beach escapes, the Department of Tourism (DOT) said Wednesday. The recognition comes at a time when rising fuel prices and global economic challenges continue to shape travel patterns worldwide. The DOT said the citation underscores El Nido's sustained reputation as a premier destination offering exceptional natural scenery and meaningful travel experiences. The destination continues to draw visitors with its pristine beaches, clear blue waters and dramatic limestone formations that cater to both leisure and adventure seekers. DOT officer in charge Secretary Verna Buensuceso said the recognition reflects the Philippines' strong standing in the global tourism market. "Citations such as these affirm the beauty and prestige of the many treasures that we boast to the world," Buensuceso said. "This recognition proves that El Nido, like our other coastal destinations, can offer the same level of quality vacations as our global counterparts," she added. BBC journalist Francis Augustin highlighted El Nido's wide range of marine

activities, including visits to hidden beaches and lagoons across Bacuit Bay. The DOT added that efforts are under way to strengthen El Nido's position as a cruise tourism destination following recent port calls by international vessels. El Nido now stands alongside beach destinations in New York, Italy, Puerto Rico, India, St. Maarten, Scotland and Tasmania in the BBC's curated list.

- [Duterte: Pray for truth](#) (2026-04-01 16:12)

VICE President Sara Duterte called on Filipinos to pray for a society driven by truth, justice and sincere compassion as the country observes Holy Week. In a video message, Duterte stressed that Holy Week is a time to reflect on the “great sacrifice of the Lord — an offering of self that reminds us that the true meaning of life is found in serving others.” “The silence of these days allows for a sincere examination of our aspirations — for ourselves, for our families and for our nation,” Duterte said. She also recognized the sacrifices of fellow citizens, especially overseas Filipino workers in the Middle East amid the ongoing war between Iran, Israel and the United States. “Amid the conflict, we pray for their safety. They are living examples of sacrifice, and we ask for peace in the places where they are stationed,” Duterte said. She urged Filipinos to use the lessons of Jesus Christ's sacrifice as an “inspiration for us to unite for a strong and prosperous Philippines.” Meanwhile, House Speaker Faustino Dy III called on the public to use Holy Week as a “time for reflection, renewal and recommitment to the values that strengthen families and the nation.” “This Holy Week, I invite all Filipinos to pause and reflect on the meaning of these days. Holy Week reminds us of sacrifice, forgiveness and hope — virtues that guide us as people and as a nation,” Dy said. He urged Filipinos to turn reflection into action by deepening their faith, strengthening family ties and cultivating a deeper and more genuine concern for others.

- [DOLE holds nationwide job fairs](#) (2026-04-01 16:11)

MORE than 1,800 jobseekers landed jobs on the spot through a series of sectoral job fairs led by the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), underscoring the agency's intensified efforts to expand access to jobs, particularly for vulnerable and priority groups. Labor Secretary Bienvenido Laguesma said the job fairs zeroed in on two priority sectors: displaced construction workers and graduating senior high school Technical-Vocational-Livelihood (TVL) students, along with Alternative Learning System (ALS) learners. “This reflects a targeted, lifecycle-based approach to employment facilitation — addressing both workers reentering the labor force and first-time jobseekers transitioning from education to employment,” Laguesma said Wednesday. For displaced construction workers, he said, the DOLE mounted job fairs in 14 regions on March 25, 26 and 30, offering nearly 29,000 vacancies in construction and related industries. Laguesma added that out of 2,166 applicants, 395 were hired on the spot, delivering immediate income and stability. More construction-focused job fairs are lined up in May, including in the National Capital Region and Negros Island Region, to further expand opportunities in the sector. Laguesma said that by concentrating on construction and allied industries, DOLE improved placement efficiency and accelerated worker redeployment,

ensuring that applicants' skills and experience aligned closely with current industry demand. At the same time, DOLE partnered with the Department of Education to roll out job fairs for graduating TVL students and ALS learners nationwide. Designed to ease the school-to-work transition, the initiative reached over 7,300 students and resulted in more than 1,700 hired on the spot, including new beneficiaries of the Special Program for Employment of Students (SPES). With over 43,000 vacancies offered, the fairs opened strong entry points for first-time jobseekers across multiple industries. He added that the effort is part of DOLE's continuing, calendarized job fair program, ensuring steady, nationwide access to opportunities for both jobseekers and employers through DOLE and Bureau of Local Employment platforms. Laguesma said the Labor department continues to work closely with local government units, industry partners and relevant government agencies to expand employment opportunities, facilitate worker transitions and support recovery across affected sectors. Key initiatives include the enhancement of its labor market information system — particularly the PhilJobNet online portal — to provide real-time, verified job postings for youth and other jobseekers, as well as intensified partnerships with Public Employment Service Offices, national government agencies, local government units, the private sector and social partners to expand the reach of job fairs and employment services nationwide through the Trabaho sa Bagong Pilipinas. Laguesma said the DOLE is also actively implementing and scaling up preemployment and internship programs such as the SPES, Government Internship Program and JobStart Philippines, while supporting the career development needs of students and first-time jobseekers. He added that the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (Tesda), an attached agency of the DOLE, will likewise heighten and expand its scholarship programs as directed by the president to ensure that every Filipino family will have at least one child who completes a Tesda course to guarantee employability.

- [US seeks to expand access to PH market](#) (2026-04-01 16:10)

(UPDATE) THE United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) will lead a trade mission to the Philippines in April to expand market access for at least 58 American farmers, ranchers and producers. The USDA noted that the Philippines is the tenth largest market for US agricultural and food products, averaging \$3.4 billion in annual exports over the past five years. The mission to be held from April 13 to 16 "follows a landmark trade agreement negotiated by President Donald Trump in July 2025, which opened new opportunities for US agricultural exports to the Philippines," the USDA said on Monday. The US Embassy in Manila shared the USDA's announcement on Wednesday. Deputy Undersecretary for Trade and Foreign Agricultural Affairs Michelle Bekkering will lead a delegation of 58 US agribusinesses, trade associations and representatives from four State departments of agriculture. "USDA is committed to getting American farmers, ranchers and agribusinesses better access to strong markets and fair opportunities abroad," said Bekkering in a statement. "Since the Philippines is one of the fastest-growing markets in Asia, this mission will connect US exporters directly with reliable buyers, strengthen our trade relationship, and help keep American agriculture globally competitive," she said. With a population of 118 million, a rapidly expanding middle class, and

strong consumer preference for US products, the Philippines "offers enormous growth potential for American exporters," the USDA added. During the visit, USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service staff and regional experts will host market briefings, site visits, and business-to-business meetings with buyers from the Philippines. State departments of agriculture from Idaho, Kansas, Nebraska and Wisconsin will join the mission alongside the 58 agribusinesses and trade associations.

- [Negotiations with Iran 'feasible' – analysts](#) (2026-04-01 16:09)

NEGOTIATIONS with Tehran to secure safe passage for Philippine-bound oil tankers through the Strait of Hormuz are "feasible," but the government should also push to keep any transit fees minimal to prevent spikes in domestic fuel prices, analysts said Tuesday. "Engaging Iran to secure safe passage for Philippine-bound oil tankers is a pragmatic step to manage near-term supply risks, given the country's heavy reliance on Middle East crude and the critical role of the Strait of Hormuz in global oil flows," Union Bank of the Philippines Chief Economist Ruben Carlo Asuncion told The Manila Times. "Any disruption, even temporary, can quickly feed into higher domestic fuel prices, with knock-on effects on inflation, transport costs, and household spending," he added. From a geopolitical perspective, Asuncion said this approach "reflects issue-specific diplomacy rather than a shift in strategic alignment." "While the Philippines is a US treaty ally, it is not a party to the conflict, and safeguarding civilian energy supplies is a legitimate national interest," the analyst said. "At the same time, the episode highlights the need to reduce long-term vulnerability through greater energy diversification, stronger buffer stocks, and accelerated investment in alternative energy sources," he added. Rizal Commercial Banking Corp. Chief Economist Michael Ricafort told The Times that the Philippines should also seek to keep transit fees minimal to prevent spikes in domestic fuel prices. "This is a prudent and urgent measure amid the need to secure more petroleum supply, as part of state of energy emergency already done by other countries around the world such as India, Pakistan, Malaysia, Thailand," Ricafort said. "Though Iran signaled that there could be a toll fee that could increase shipping costs, better to negotiate minimal toll fee for ships passing through the Strait of Hormuz," he added. Chester Cabalza, security analyst and president and founder of the Manila-based think tank International Development and Security Cooperation, agreed that the Philippines must reach out to Iran for the passage of Philippines-bound oil tankers through the Strait of Hormuz, citing the two countries' "good relations." "The Philippines has robust bilateral relations with Iran, shown with the increasing number of medical and dentistry Iranian students in Philippine top universities," Cabalza told The Times. Political analyst Froilan Calilung, meanwhile, described the Philippines' engagement with Iran as "a de-risking strategy designed to decouple national energy security from regional military tensions." "By pursuing high-level diplomatic talks, the administration is attempting to leverage the country's non-belligerent status to secure 'non-hostile' classification for its vessels — thereby ensuring the survival of its economy without compromising its defense treaty with the United States," Calilung told The Times. With 98 percent of crude oil imports passing through the Middle East, Calilung said the Philippines was a "hostage to geography." "Securing the Strait of Hormuz is not

a choice but a necessity to prevent a projected 50 percent price hike in essential commodities like rice, pork and chicken," he said. Calilung, who teaches political science at the University of Santo Tomas, said the Philippines was successfully differentiating between military alliance and economic participation. "While maintaining its 1951 Mutual Defense Treaty (MDT) with the US, the administration is making it clear that 'war was never in the Philippines' interest," the analyst said. "This 'middle-of-the-road' approach allows Manila to talk to Tehran for trade safety without violating its commitments to Washington," he added. The analyst also said the president's declaration of a state of national energy emergency served as the legal anchor for these talks. He said it shifted the narrative from "foreign intervention" to "emergency resource procurement," giving the government the mandate to bypass standard private-sector limitations and engage in government-to-government negotiations. "Analytically, the risk is not just oil; it is labor. As a major provider of global seafarers, the Philippines has a unique humanitarian leverage. Protecting Philippine-bound tankers inherently protects Filipino lives, providing a moral and political shield," Calilung said. He added that Marcos' order to Foreign Affairs Secretary Theresa Lazaro to negotiate with Iran marked a shift from a reactive foreign policy to a proactive "chief architect" role. "Success depends on whether Iran accepts the Philippines' neutrality as genuine and whether the US views these 'non-hostile' negotiations as a necessary exception for a regional ally's economic sanctioned state like Iran," he said.

- [Angara honors teachers as school year closes](#) (2026-04-01 16:08)

EDUCATION Secretary Sonny Angara honored teachers and reaffirmed the department's push to raise the quality of Philippine education as School Year 2025-2026 ended. In his message, Angara said that the dedication of teachers is crucial to the country's efforts to strengthen the education system. "To our beloved teachers across the country, I want to greet and thank you for your resilience, care, and silent heroism in our classrooms," Angara said. Over the past few months, the executive team of the Department of Education has visited hundreds of schools, meeting teachers and school heads to share their concerns and suggestions on improving the education system. The visits and consultations with teachers led to updates in policies on classroom observations, overtime and overload pay, and efforts to ease administrative workload, among others. "Under the leadership of President Ferdinand Marcos Jr., it is clear in our promise to improve the lives of our teachers and increase our support to you," Angara noted. He said that the department has intensified support for educators, including the distribution of laptops and learning resources and the implementation of the Expanded Career Progression System, which aims to provide clearer promotion pathways for teachers and school heads. It also aims to promote up to 100,000 teachers and school heads by the end of School Year 2025-2026. Angara urged educators to take time to rest after months of academic work and end-of-school-year activities. "The future of Philippine education is being shaped every day in your classrooms. This administration will continue working so that every Filipino teacher can teach with dignity, support and hope. Together, we will move our schools — and our nation — forward," he said. Angara, meanwhile, challenged graduates to maintain their spirit of resilience as they transition out of the basic education system, reminding them that their ability

to overcome setbacks will be their most critical asset in the face of future trials. “You stayed the course and learned to rise after setbacks. That resilience will matter far beyond the classroom,” he said. He also thanked parents and teachers for helping students. “Behind every learner’s success stands a community. To our teachers, thank you for teaching not only lessons but also courage. To our parents and families, your support made every achievement possible,” Angara said. More than 1.9 million Grade 6 learners and 1.8 million Grade 12 learners are graduating this school year, both from public and private schools.

- [Aid, free rides inadequate amid oil crisis – coalition](#) (2026-04-01 16:07)

TEMPORARY interventions such as aid and free rides will not fix the country’s worsening transport crisis amid rising oil prices, transport advocacy groups said Wednesday. In a solidarity statement released on April 1, the Move as One Coalition said the oil price spike has exposed deeper and long-standing failures in the public transportation system that continue to hurt drivers, commuters and ordinary workers. According to the group, the crisis goes beyond high fuel prices, with many drivers earning little income, commuters struggling to find rides, and workers forced to walk long distances to get home. Mobility, the group said, should be treated as a right and not a privilege for those who own private vehicles. It said stopgap measures such as financial aid and free rides do not address the root of the problem and merely cover up the collapse in the supply of sufficient and reliable public transportation. Moreover, it said the burden continues to fall on the 94 percent of Filipinos who do not own cars and rely on public transportation for their daily trips. It suggested the government must shift to long-term, people-centered transport policies rather than short-term responses. The group pushed for reliable and sufficient public transportation through expanded net service contracting under what it called “Siguradong Sakay.” It stated this would allow continuous public transport operations while providing drivers with financial support based on their travel distance. “Libreng Sakay” (free ride) may even worsen losses for some drivers because passengers tend to choose free rides, leaving other operators with fewer riders, it warned. It called on the Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board to exempt local government units from the Certificate of Public Convenience requirement so they can provide transport services and respond faster to local demand. Furthermore, the group called for longer operation hours for LRT-1, LRT-2, MRT-3, and PNR, including limited train operations during Holy Week for people who still need to travel for work and livelihood. To protect drivers’ livelihoods, it urged the Department of Transportation to immediately release the equity subsidy for modern public utility vehicles and impose a moratorium on loan payments for modern units. It also called for lifting restrictions on light electric vehicles and e-trikes on national highways and creating more priority lanes for public utility vehicles, bicycles and pedestrians.

- [Flood control work continue during Holy Week](#) (2026-04-01 16:06)

CLEANUP, dredging and desilting of major waterways across the country will continue during Holy Week as part of the government's bid to move to prevent flooding, the Department of

Public Works and Highways (DPWH) said. DPWH Secretary Vince Dizon said on Wednesday that despite the holiday period, field teams remain deployed in key areas, carrying out around-the-clock clearing of waterways clogged by silt, debris and waste. He said these operations aim to restore water flow, increase the carrying capacity of waterways, and prevent overflow during heavy rains. "From Luzon to Mindanao, crews are clearing rivers, esteros, and drainage systems of silt, debris and waste, restoring water flow and boosting capacity to handle heavy rains," Dizon added. The intensified efforts form part of the expanded Oplan Kontra Baha program, in line with the president's directive to strengthen flood mitigation measures nationwide. He added that by sustaining operations even during Holy Week, authorities are working to stay ahead of the expected onset of the wet season and minimize disruptions to communities. Dredging and desilting activities are underway in high-risk and flood-prone areas, including Metro Manila, Ilocos, and Cagayan Valley; Naga, Cebu, and Bacolod; and Maguindanao. These locations were identified based on vulnerability to flooding, historical data, and sediment buildup that restricts water flow. In urban centers such as Metro Manila, clearing operations also target drainage systems often blocked by solid waste, contributing to flash floods during sudden downpours. Dizon said the simultaneous nationwide clearing of waterways reflects a more proactive, preventive approach to disaster risk reduction — focusing not just on response, but on preparedness and mitigation. The ongoing work, he said, also highlights the importance of interagency coordination and community participation. The DPWH chief urged residents to support the initiative by practicing proper waste disposal and helping keep waterways clear, as even small blockages can significantly affect drainage efficiency. "With the rainy season fast approaching, sustained, large-scale efforts like these are critical to protecting lives, safeguarding infrastructure, and reducing the economic impact of flooding across the country," Dizon stressed. Last Jan. 14, Dizon signed a special order creating a task force for Oplan Kontra Baha, headed by Undersecretary for Special Concerns Charles Calima Jr. The same task force was replicated in all 177 DPWH regional offices nationwide. The Task Force Kontra Baha will coordinate with the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority, Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Department of the Interior and Local Government, and private sector. Dizon gave the task force six months, or until July, to finish its mission and thereafter submit an accomplishment report detailing improvements, challenges, solutions, resources consumed, and targets achieved.

- [No real opposition, politics driven by personalities — analyst](#) (2026-04-01 16:05)

A political analyst has raised concerns over what he described as the absence of a genuine opposition in the Philippines, saying political dynamics are driven more by personalities than by policy alternatives. Carlos "Itos" Valdes, former president of the Katipunan ng Demokratikong Pilipino (KDP), said in an interview with The Manila Times that it is difficult to identify a coherent opposition bloc that clearly challenges government policies or offers a distinct national program. "Who are the opposition? There's none," Valdes said, stressing that the term has become vague in the current political landscape. He pointed out that figures often labeled as part of the opposition are not necessarily advancing positions that contradict the

administration's policies. Instead, many are engaged in political disputes rooted in personal or situational interests rather than substantive policy differences. Valdes cited the lack of clear issue-based positions among national figures, noting that even high-profile personalities have yet to articulate concrete proposals on key concerns such as energy policy, economic management, or structural reforms. "What are they against? What policies are they opposing?" he asked, adding that criticism directed at the government often centers on personalities or immediate controversies rather than long-term governance issues. The analyst also questioned the readiness of potential contenders in the 2028 national elections, saying many have not presented comprehensive platforms that address the country's challenges. "They talk about running for higher office, but where is the policy? Where is the program?" he said. According to Valdes, the current political environment reflects a broader shift toward personality-driven politics, where public messaging is dominated by general statements and appeals rather than detailed policy frameworks. He said this trend weakens democratic discourse by limiting voters' ability to evaluate candidates based on concrete plans and measurable goals. Valdes emphasized that a functioning opposition should provide clear alternatives to government policy, offering solutions that respond to national issues and contribute to informed public debate. Without this, he warned, political competition risks being reduced to contests of popularity rather than a substantive exchange of ideas on governance and reform.

- [PNP receives over P500M new equipment](#) (2026-04-01 16:04)

THE Philippine National Police (PNP) on Wednesday blessed newly procured equipment under the Capability Enhancement Program (CEP) Fiscal Year 2025 and Congress-Introduced Changes and Adjustments (CICA) FY 2024 at Camp Crame in Quezon City. PNP chief Gen. Jose Melencio Nartatez Jr. led the ceremony attended by PNP officials and members of the media. Under CEP FY 2025, the PNP received equipment valued at P244,710,956, including 800 sets of CDM Equipment, 3,711 units of All Purpose Waistcoat Vest, 600 sets of Non-Lethal Equipment, and 403 units of Autogated Night Vision Device (Monocular). CICA FY 2024 contributed additional assets worth P262,285,700, comprising 117 units of Personnel Carrier 4x4 and 71 units of Light Motorcycles. These acquisitions aim to enhance the mobility, protection and operational readiness of PNP personnel. Nartatez said these new assets will strengthen the operational capability of PNP units, particularly the Tourist Police Units, enhancing crime-prevention efforts and overall police visibility in key areas. "This will enhance the capability of our police units to prevent focus crimes in their respective areas," he said. "We will immediately use the equipment this Holy Week and other activities to ensure public safety," Nartatez said.

- [Public urged to get flu shots](#) (2026-04-01 16:03)

HEALTH experts on Wednesday advised the public to get flu vaccines as cases of "summer flu" are expected to rise during Holy Week. In a statement, the Pharmaceutical and Healthcare Association of the Philippines (PHAP) said influenza cases can spike outside of the rainy season. While less common, "summer flu" can still occur as travel, reunions and religious activities

during Holy Week lead to closer contact and a higher risk of transmission. PHAP emphasized the importance of early vaccination, noting that it takes about two weeks for the body to develop protective antibodies after receiving the flu shot. “It takes about two weeks for the body to build protective antibodies after vaccination, so getting vaccinated early is critical, especially for high-risk groups such as seniors, pregnant women and individuals with chronic conditions,” said Dr. Melvin Sanicas, an expert in global health. Sanicas said that influenza can cause serious complications for people with underlying conditions. “Influenza can lead to complications such as pneumonia, and effects on the heart and brain, which may result in hospitalization or even death,” Sanicas said. To mitigate this, PHAP is advocating for collective action through its “IBA ang BAKUNADO” campaign. “Protecting communities from flu and other vaccine-preventable diseases requires a united effort from the government, health workers and private sector partners to ensure timely vaccine access and strong public awareness, especially ahead of the rainy season,” said Teodoro Padilla, executive director of PHAP. He advised the public to stay up to date with their vaccinations, adding that Filipinos can consult their health care providers or visit clinics, hospitals and pharmacies to get vaccinated. PHAP urged the public to take preventive measures while traveling, such as proper hand-washing, wearing masks in crowded settings and staying home when sick.

- [More Filipinos traveling during Holy Week](#) (2026-04-01 16:02)

THE number of Filipinos traveling abroad during Holy Week increased by 50 percent year on year, according to travel service provider Trip.com. The figure is higher than the same period in 2025, reflecting a “strong appetite” for international travel, especially to nearby countries in Southeast Asia. Filipino travelers prefer Asian destinations for Holy Week holidays, citing shorter travel time, diverse cultural attractions, and vibrant shopping and dining scenes. Hong Kong topped the list of destinations for Filipino travelers, followed by Tokyo and Singapore. Bangkok and Taipei rounded out the top five. Osaka, Japan; Seoul, South Korea; Macao; Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia; and Hanoi, Vietnam, completed the top 10.” This reflects Filipino travelers’ strong preference for nearby Asian cities, which offer convenient flight access, vibrant cultural experiences, and a variety of leisure and shopping experiences,” Trip.com said. Meanwhile, it said domestic travel remains popular, with Manila, Cebu and Palawan among the top three domestic destinations, followed by Boracay and Davao del Sur. The provinces of Bohol, Iloilo, Negros Occidental, Leyte and Misamis Oriental rounded out the top 10. Trip.com attributed this to a combination of leisure trips and hometown visits. It noted that Filipino travelers are becoming “more deliberate” when planning their Holy Week trips.” On average, travelers are booking around 74 days before departure, indicating a preference for advanced trip planning as travelers look to secure flights, accommodations and activities well ahead of the peak holiday period,” Trip.com said in a statement. “The data also reveals that April 3 (Good Friday) is expected to be the busiest travel date, as many Filipinos begin their journeys at the start of the long holiday break.” For some, this means returning to home provinces for family gatherings and religious observances; for others, it marks the start of extended leisure trips. The data showed Filipinos are increasingly using the week for extended vacations. The average trip length

this year is approximately 9.57 days, largely in line with last year's 10.03 days. Trip.com highlighted evolving demographics. Women account for the majority of Holy Week travelers, making up 60 percent of bookings, compared to 40 percent for men. Travelers ages 35 to 49 represent the largest segment at 38 percent, followed by those ages 25 to 34 at 21 percent. Working professionals are the primary drivers of demand. A notable behavioral shift was the rise of independent travel; nearly 70 percent of bookings were made by solo travelers. Trip.com said this reflects "a growing preference for flexibility, personalized itineraries and self-directed experiences." Trip.com's data compared this year's Holy Week figures (April 1–12, 2026) with last year's (April 16–27, 2025). "Indeed, Holy Week is emerging as one of the Philippines' most significant travel periods supported by strong demand across both domestic and international markets," Trip.com said. "With outbound travel surging and local destinations remaining resilient, 2026 is shaping up to be one of the busiest Holy Week travel seasons yet."

- [One person injured in crane basket fall](#) (2026-04-01 13:52)

MANILA, Philippines—The Manila City Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Department (DRRM) on Wednesday reported that one person got injured after a crane basket carrying sand fell from a construction site in Manila. According to their initial report, the incident occurred at a building under construction along Florentino Torres Street at the corner of Gonzalo Puyat Street. The crane basket was reportedly lifting sand to an upper level of the structure when it fell. The injured individual was immediately sent to the nearest hospital. The Manila Police District told the Manila Times that investigations are still ongoing to identify the cause of the incident.

- [OTS inspects NAIA to ensure safe Semana Santa travel](#) (2026-04-01 13:32)

MANILA, Philippines - The Office for Transportation Security (OTS) conducted a security inspection at Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA) on Wednesday to ensure safe, orderly, and efficient travel during Semana Santa (Holy Week). OTS Administrator Undersecretary Gilberto DC Cruz said the activity aimed to strictly enforce safety measures for passengers, personnel, and transport operators. During the visit to NAIA Terminal 3, the agency—joined by NAIA Special Assistant to the SMC President and CEO for Security-Related Matters Ramon A. Ragasa, along with other stakeholders—inspected the Overseas Filipino Workers' lane and lounge to promote passenger welfare. The team also demonstrated two newly commissioned Explosive Detection Systems equipped with Computed Tomography technology, as well as an Automatic Tray Return system. This advanced equipment is designed to enhance the speed, accuracy, and efficiency of airport screening operations. "The safety and convenience of the traveling public remain our top priority, especially during peak travel periods such as Semana Santa. We will continue to intensify our monitoring and enforcement efforts to uphold the highest standards of security across all transport facilities," Cruz said. After completing the NAIA assessment, the OTS team proceeded to other ports to continue inspections.

- [Palace to detractors, critics this Holy Week: Stop politicking](#) (2026-04-01 13:14)

MANILA, Philippines — Malacañang urged detractors of President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. and critics of his administration to reflect this Holy Week instead of politicking. Presidential Communications Office (PCO) Undersecretary Claire Castro said fear mongering, spreading of misinformation and disinformation, and trolling the government will not do good for the country especially amid all the problems it is facing, particularly the effects of war in the Middle East. Marcos, she said, is focused on working for the Filipinos and finding ways to address the crisis. “For now, let's avoid politicking. If they have nothing good to say and just slander, they should stop for now or stop permanently and just cooperate with the administration for the upliftment of our country and the upliftment of every Filipino,” Castro said in Filipino in a radio interview. “The president is busy working,” she added. Among those very vocal in criticizing Marcos is Congressman Paolo Duterte who said the chief executive is more concerned about optics and building his legacy rather than tackling pressing issues such as rising prices of fuel and commodities. “We know what's happening now. The president doesn't like the conflict happening in the Middle East. So, what is he saying about focusing only on the legacy? The president is not just focusing on the legacy. The president is working,” Castro said. The official further stated that, unlike the past leadership, Marcos has led mitigating measures to cushion the impact of global oil price volatility triggered by hostilities in the Middle East. This includes looking for alternative sources of fuel supply, financial assistance and subsidies for various sectors, and involving all agencies for a whole-of-government approach to solve the problems.

- [PH committing ‘suicide’ if govt partners with China in WPS oil exploration — Carpio](#) (2026-04-01 09:48)

MANILA, Philippines — Former Supreme Court Associate Justice Antonio Carpio on Wednesday said the Philippines would be “committing suicide” if the government entered into oil and gas explorations in the West Philippine Sea (WPS) with China, given its definition of joint development which completely goes against the Constitution. “For the Chinese, joint development means they own the oil and gas. But out of friendship, they allow other countries to participate in developing the gas or oil field,” Carpio said in a television interview on Wednesday. For Carpio, the Philippines cannot accept that because the Reed Bank, among the areas believed to be rich in natural gas, is within our exclusive economic zone (EEZ) and that the Constitution reserves the use and enjoyment of the marine resources in the exclusive economic zone exclusively to Filipino citizens. “So, we cannot accept the condition of China that they own the oil and gas. That's against our constitution. That's against the [2016] arbitral award,” Carpio said. Carpio said that this was the very reason former president Rodrigo Duterte, through his former Foreign Affairs secretary Teddy Boy Locsin, completely terminated the talks on oil and gas explorations in 2022. China, at the last minute, demanded two service contract provisions — to remove the phrase saying oil and gas belonged to the Philippines and that the deal would be governed by Philippine law. “So, you do not see the Philippines benefiting from this possible joint exploration. That kind of joint development where we acknowledge that China owns the oil and (2:25) gas is against the Constitution. No government can enter into such

an agreement,” Carpio said. Even the Armed Forces of the Philippines reiterated that China was “not a reliable partner” in negotiations given their historical coercion and aggression in Philippine waters.

- [PH eyes 'deepening cooperation' with Iran on energy](#) (2026-04-01 09:26)

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippines is committed to "deepening cooperation" with Iran, particularly on energy, Foreign Affairs Secretary Theresa Lazaro said on Wednesday as the import-dependent archipelago jockeys with other regional countries for desperately needed oil. The price of fuel has hit historic highs in the Philippines since treaty ally the United States and Israel launched strikes on Iran on February 28, with the war forcing the partial closure of the vital Strait of Hormuz. President Ferdinand Marcos declared a state of national energy emergency last week, later saying that "nothing was off the table" as the country of 116 million tried to meet its need for fuel. Lazaro said in a post on social media platform X on Wednesday that she had explored "key avenues of operation" in a meeting with Iranian Ambassador Yousef Esmailzadeh that also included Philippine energy secretary Sharon Garin. "Building on the momentum of our Political Consultations last November 2025, we are committed to deepening our cooperation across all fronts, particularly energy cooperation," she said of the meeting. The Department of Foreign Affairs offered no further details of the meeting, but it comes just days after Malaysia announced its tankers would be permitted to pass through the Strait of Hormuz without paying any toll to Iran. The Iranian embassy in Manila declined to comment on the meeting. A stock exchange filing on Monday revealed that the Philippines' sole oil refinery had secured nearly 2.5 million barrels of Russian crude out of "extreme necessity". AFP had previously reported that a tanker filled with Russian crude oil had arrived at the harbor servicing refinery operator Petron Corp, a purchase unthinkable before the United States eased sanctions tied to Moscow's war in Ukraine.

- [Marcos, Duterte ratings drop in Q1 of 2026](#) (2026-04-01 08:42)

MANILA, Philippines — President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. and Vice President Sara Duterte's approval and trust ratings dropped in the first quarter of 2026, according to a non-commissioned survey released on Wednesday. Marcos' approval and trust ratings fell from 22 percent to 19 percent and 15 percent to 13 percent respectively while Duterte's approval and trust ratings fell from 34 percent to 28 percent and 31 percent to 26 percent, based on Pahayag 2026, a non-commissioned survey, under PUBLiCus Asia. Dissatisfaction with flood control accountability, handling of his predecessor's International Criminal Court (ICC) case, and rising fuel prices were cited against Marcos while Duterte's marks were influenced by the impeachment complaints against her and ICC developments involving her father, former president Rodrigo Duterte who is detained at The Hague for crimes against humanity linked to his campaign against drugs. Senate President Tito Sotto with a 23 percent and 14 percent approval and trust ratings ranked second to Duterte who remained the government official with the highest ratings despite the drop. Next was Speaker Faustino “Bojie” Dy, with 11 percent approval, 6 percent trust ratings and Chief Justice Alexander Gesmundo, with 16 percent

approval and 10 percent trust ratings. Among the government agencies which rated high were Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (Tesda), with 65 percent approval and 45 percent trust ratings, followed by the Department of Science and Technology (DOST), 55 percent approval and 39 percent trust ratings and the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP), 53 percent approval and 37 percent trust ratings. Political and infrastructure institutions, such as the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) and the House of Representatives registered the lowest public ratings. The first quarter 2026 survey of Pahayag from March 21 to 24, 2026 sampled 1,509 registered Filipino voters through the Singapore office of PureSpectrum, a US-based panel marketplace. The survey tracks seven key modules: state of the country and economy, national issues, macro and micro concerns, approval and trust ratings of leaders and institutions, emotional perception of leaders, performance of elected officials, and media consumption habits.

- [Holy Week travelers urged to check vehicles, keep hotlines](#) (2026-04-01 07:56)

MANILA, Philippines — The Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) and Metro Pacific Tollways Corp. (MPTC) reminded motorists traveling this Holy Week to inspect their vehicles before heading out and to keep emergency and roadside assistance hotlines ready, as authorities brace for heavier movement on major roads and expressways. In an advisory released Wednesday, the MMDA urged the public to do a “BLOWBAGETS” check before travel, covering battery, lights, oil, water, brakes, air, gas, engine, tires and self. The agency said motorists should make sure their vehicles were in good running condition and continue following traffic rules to help keep trips safe during the Holy Week. MPTC said it had rolled out its “Biyaheng Arangkada” motorist assistance program from March 27 to April 6 across NLEX, SCTEX, NLEX Connector, CAVITEX, CALAX and CCLEX in Cebu. It said personnel deployment had been increased across its network to improve traffic management, incident response and toll operations during the holiday rush. The tollway operator said roadside assistance stations had been strategically positioned, medical teams were on standby at select stops, and free 24/7 basic mechanical services were available at all NLEX and SCTEX Rest and Refuel stations. It added that free towing to the nearest exit for Class 1 vehicles would be available from 6 a.m. on March 27 until 6 a.m. on April 6. MPTC also said roadworks, lane closures and maintenance activities would be suspended during the period to help keep traffic moving, while teams were ready to activate counterflow schemes when conditions permit. It advised motorists to plan trips ahead of peak hours and said heavy northbound traffic was expected on NLEX from Wednesday afternoon to Thursday afternoon. Motorists needing traffic assistance in Metro Manila may call the MMDA hotline 136, which remains the agency’s main contact line for road and traffic concerns. For urgent emergencies such as crashes or incidents needing immediate response, travelers may call the national emergency hotline 911. Those needing to report road concerns to the Department of Public Works and Highways may contact 165-02 or 0961-684-7084, which are listed on the agency’s official contact page. Motorists traveling through NLEX, SCTEX, NLEX Connector, CAVITEX, CALAX and other MPTC-managed expressways may call 1-35000, which the company said was available 24/7 along with updates through the MPT DriveHub app. Users of

SLEX, Skyway, STAR, NAIAX and TPLEX who have RFID or toll account concerns may also contact Autosweep customer care at (+632) 5318-TOLL (8655). For health-related emergencies, the public may also call the Philippine Red Cross hotline 143, which the organization lists as its emergency hotline on its official contact page.

- [US orders search for missing World War II American soldiers from ship wreckage off Subiic Bay](#) (2026-04-01 06:56)

MANILA, Philippines — The United States Department of Defense has started excavating a ship wreckage off Subic Bay to recover missing American servicemen believed to be on board the Oryoku Maru sank by the US Navy during World War II. Kelly McKeague, director of the Defense POW/MIA (prisoner or war/missing in action) Accounting Agency, said the Japanese transport ship was "mistakenly bombed by US Navy aircraft" in December 1944. "The ship was unmarked. But it held over 2,500 Allied prisoners of war as the ship was taking them from the Philippines back to Japan," McKeague said in virtual press briefing on Wednesday. "We estimate there might be over 250 missing Americans in the hull of the ship. We think they might be limited to one or two hulls and that's where the divers are currently operating on," he said. McKeague said the DPAA began the mission "three years ago to investigate the site and the wreckage from the standpoint of trying to understand what it was." "What the ship looked like? So using this cutting edge underwater vehicles, we recreated a three-dimensional image of the ship and then allowed us to begin excavation which began in February of this past year," he said. "And we have benefitted from the relationship with the Philippine Armed Forces in helping us excavate this wreckage," McKeague added as he leads US efforts to repatriate missing American military personnel in Southeast Asia and the Pacific. He said the mission was "rooted in a sacred promise that the United States will search for, recover, and identify the remains of Americans missing from past wars." McKeague said the DPAA did not have any missions in either in the Visayas or Mindanao. "However, we do work often, in fact, year round in the Philippines," he said. "Currently we have teams in Leyte, Luzon, and Mindoro. And again this benefits greatly from the relationship that we established with the Philippine Armed Forces," he added. "Everyday DPAA teams operate across the globe in archives, remote jungles, mountainous terrains and underwater. Our professionals apply painstaking historical research, archaeological tenacity and cutting edge forensic science," he said. "We do this to provide answers to their families and the nation. This is more than a military mission. It is also a tool of diplomacy and a humanitarian one that binds allies, strengthens partners and reconciles with former enemies," he said. The DPAA said McKeague was responsible for policy, control, and oversight of all aspects of the department's program to account for missing American personnel from past conflicts.

- [PNP validates girl's claims in viral post to Marcos](#) (2026-04-01 05:52)

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippine National Police (PNP) is verifying the claims of a girl from Camarines Sur to President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. about an abusive local village official. In a statement on Wednesday, the PNP said personnel from the Tinambac Municipal Police Station,

together with investigators from the Provincial Investigation and Detective Management Unit (PIDMU), went to Barangay Caloco to validate allegations of “alleged harassment, community safety issues, and a previous rape case.” “Police records show that the rape case was filed in 2023 and is currently under trial at the Regional Trial Court, with the accused already in detention at Tinangis Penal Farm,” Gen. Jose Melencio Nartatez Jr., PNP chief, said in a statement on Wednesday. Nartatez said interviews were conducted with the family of the student, barangay officials, and the alleged victim. The PNP also verified a separate complaint regarding missing electrical drop wires, which had been previously reported at the barangay level, although mediation efforts were not completed due to the non-appearance of involved parties. Follow-up operations were also conducted to assess the situation on the ground and ensure that all concerns, especially those involving minors, are properly addressed, Nartatez said.

- [Marcos orders adoption of local names for 131 Kalayaan Island features in Palawan, West PH Sea](#) (2026-04-01 04:13)

MANILA, Philippines — President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. has ordered the adoption of local names for more than 100 features of the Kalayaan Island Group (KIG) in Kalayaan, Palawan, and the West Philippine Sea, Malacañang has said. Marcos issued Executive Order (EO) 111, which strengthens administration and governance, as well as sovereignty, in Palawan and the West Philippine Sea. Under EO 57, the National Maritime Council (NMC) recommended the adoption of the standard set of Philippine names for 131 features of the KIG located in Kalayaan, Palawan, and the West Philippine Sea. NMC said that it was imperative to adopt a standard set of Philippine names for maritime features in the KIG to ensure efficient administration and governance of the area and to exercise the country’s sovereignty in the West Philippine Sea.

- [Where's the big fish? Palace says DOJ, Ombudsman 'overwhelmed' with ICI cases](#) (2026-04-01 04:07)

MANILA, Philippines — The Department of Justice (DOJ) and the Office of the Ombudsman are currently “overwhelmed” by the volume of cases referred by the Independent Commission for Infrastructure (ICI), Malacañang said Wednesday, a day after the panel ceased its operations. Palace Press Officer Claire Castro issued the statement after various groups have expressed dissatisfaction with the fact-finding body’s probe as it failed to hold accountable the big fish behind the flood control scam. In a radio interview, Castro said the ICI, which concluded its operations on March 31, has submitted its findings to proper authorities, including referrals involving dozens of individuals linked to questionable infrastructure projects. “The ICI is just a fact-finding committee. They are not the ones who will hold the big fish accountable. They were tasked only to gather information, facts, testimonies that can be submitted directly to the investigating bodies, like the DOJ and also the Ombudsman,” Castro said. “The filing of cases rests with the Ombudsman and DOJ,” she added. “Because of the sheer volume of the referrals, the Ombudsman and DOJ are seemingly overwhelmed.”

- [US Dept of Agriculture wants to expand access to PH market](#) (2026-04-01 03:55)

MANILA, Philippines — The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) will lead a trade mission to the Philippines in April to expand market access for at least 58 American farmers, ranchers, and producers. The USDA noted that the Philippines was the 10th largest market for US agricultural and food products, averaging \$3.4 billion in annual exports over the past five years. The mission from Apr 13 to 16 "follows a landmark trade agreement negotiated by President Donald Trump in July 2025, which opened new opportunities for US agricultural exports to the Philippines," the USDA said on Monday. The US Embassy in Manila shared the USDA's announcement on Wednesday. Deputy Undersecretary for Trade and Foreign Agricultural Affairs Michelle Bekkering will lead a delegation of 58 agribusinesses, trade associations, and representatives from four State departments of agriculture. "USDA is committed to getting American farmers, ranchers and agribusinesses better access to strong markets and fair opportunities abroad," said Bekkering in a statement. "Since the Philippines is one of the fastest-growing markets in Asia, this mission will connect US exporters directly with reliable buyers, strengthen our trade relationship, and help keep American agriculture globally competitive," she said. With a population of 118 million, a rapidly expanding middle class, and strong consumer preference for US products, the Philippines "offers enormous growth potential for American exporters," the USDA added. During the visit, USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service staff and regional experts will host market briefings, site visits, and business-to-business meetings with buyers from the Philippines. State departments of agriculture from Idaho, Kansas, Nebraska and Wisconsin will join the mission alongside the 58 agribusinesses and trade associations.

- [Palace: No holiday break for Marcos during Holy Week](#) (2026-04-01 03:40)

MANILA, Philippines — There will be no holiday break for President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. during the Holy Week, as he will continue overseeing government operations, Malacañang assured the public Wednesday. Palace Press Officer Claire Castro said Marco would remain on duty "24/7" during his stay in his home province of Ilocos Norte. "We know that wherever the President is, even in Ilocos Norte or elsewhere, once he gives an order, it must be followed, especially if it is for our countrymen," Castro said during a radio interview. "Amid the crisis in the Middle East, the President cannot stop working just because it is a holiday. It does not work that way. The President is on duty 24/7," she added.

- [Hotter Maundy Thursday until Easter Sunday likely over PH](#) (2026-03-31 23:46)

MANILA, Philippines – The entire archipelago can expect hotter, more humid weather from Maundy Thursday until Easter Sunday, the state weather agency said on Wednesday, advising the public to avoid outdoor activities, especially from late morning to mid-afternoon, to avoid fatigue, heat cramps, and heat exhaustion. Weather specialist Chenel Dominguez of the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) said in a 5 a.m. briefing that the weather systems expected to affect the country during Holy Week, or 'Semana Santa', would be the easterlies and the ridge of the High Pressure Area (HPA). At present, she said, the ridge of HPA, which is the opposite of the low-pressure area, has been

extending over Northern Luzon. Meanwhile, Metro Manila and the rest of the country could experience partly cloudy to cloudy skies with isolated rain showers or thunderstorms. “Generally, the country would likely have clear and sunny skies throughout the day with less chance of downpour, which may occur during late afternoon or at night,” according to the Pagasa forecaster. From Maundy Thursday until Easter Sunday, light to moderate easterly to southeasterly winds will prevail over Northern and Central Luzon with slight to moderate seas, according to Pagasa. Elsewhere, winds will be light to moderate coming from the east to northeast with slight to moderate seas, it added. Pagasa also advised the public to drink water regularly, take breaks in shaded areas, and wear light-colored clothing. Also, use sun protection, such as a hat or umbrella, and avoid alcohol and caffeine as much as possible. For the heat index outlook, Pagasa said Metro Manila's temperature could hit 35 degrees Celsius, which falls under the extreme caution category. The day's highest temperature could be over Virac, Catanduanes, at 45 degrees Celsius, falling under the danger level.

- [SSS to employers: Register household helpers](#) (2026-03-31 16:41)

HOUSEHOLD employers can now register their domestic helpers with the Social Security System (SSS) to ensure they are covered by the country's social security protection program through its newly launched "Kasambahay Caravan." SSS President and CEO Robert Joseph de Claro said that at least 43 sites across Metro Manila and Rizal have already been made available after its launch last week. He emphasized that the caravan was a key SSS initiative to extend protection to this overlooked group of workers. “Household helpers keep our homes running smoothly but often lack emergency protection,” de Claro said. “This initiative ensures every kasambahay can access SSS benefits such as sickness, maternity, disability, unemployment, retirement, funeral, and death,” he added in a statement. The SSS chief cited the need for house helpers to be enrolled with SSS, saying they would also benefit from several programs, including salary loans and calamity loans. “They will also get additional protection from the Employees' Compensation (EC) Program for work-related sickness, disability, or death,” he said. During the kickoff event held at SM City Marikina last week, acting SSS-National Capital Region Operations Group Senior Vice President Benjamin Dolindo Jr. said the drive was aimed at strengthening social security coverage for a sector that plays a vital role in family life. “Social security coverage for the sector that is truly important in our homes is a shared responsibility. May we continue fulfilling our responsibility to ensure that every house helper is registered and protected,” Dolindo said. The top officials emphasized that Kasambahay Caravan is part of a broader campaign to bring SSS registration and membership services closer to household workers and their employers, many of whom are still not formally enrolled. Under Republic Act 11199 or the Social Security Act of 2018, the SSS said employers are required to register their household helpers within 30 days of hiring and remit their contributions. For kasambahay earning P5,000 or more per month, household employers deduct the employee's share from the salary, add their own contribution, and pay via accredited channels. For those earning P5,000 or less, employers fully cover the contributions. SM City Marikina Mall Manager Francis Brian Cruz welcomed the partnership, saying the mall is committed to supporting

community driven programs that promote social protection. De Claro said the SSS plans to expand the caravan in other areas to close coverage gaps among household workers and ensure they receive the same basic protections as other formal sector employees.

- [Asia: Adequate jet fuel supply secured](#) (2026-03-31 16:40)

AIRASIA Philippines said it has an adequate supply of jet fuel to maintain flight operations, addressing concerns over potential travel disruptions. The reassurance followed similar statements by other major local carriers, including Philippine Airlines (PAL) and Cebu Pacific (CEB), which recently secured fuel inventories to sustain scheduled flights. President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. previously warned that jet fuel shortages linked to Middle East tensions could pose a risk to long-haul travel, calling the grounding of planes a "distinct possibility." "AirAsia continues to work closely with fuel suppliers, industry partners and relevant government stakeholders to minimize disruptions and provide seamless travel for its guests," the airline said in an advisory. CEB announced on March 29, 2026 that it has secured sufficient jet fuel to support all domestic and international flights until June 2026. Despite the fuel security, the budget carrier has implemented temporary flight cancellations and frequency reductions to manage surging global fuel prices, which have more than doubled since 2025. PAL also said it has secured enough fuel for its scheduled operations, including long-haul flights, for the foreseeable future. The flag carrier is collaborating with government regulators and fuel suppliers to ensure long-term operational stability.

- [New Nueva Ecija expressway cuts costs of transporting rice](#) (2026-03-31 16:17)

PRESIDENT Ferdinand Marcos Jr. on Tuesday led the opening of the Central Luzon Link Expressway (CLLEX) Contract Package 4 Aliaga–Cabanatuan Section, a four-lane segment expected to enhance connectivity across Central Luzon. Speaking to reporters, Marcos said the new CLLEX segment would not only cut travel time from Tarlac to Cabanatuan City but also help reduce transportation cost of commodities, particularly rice, as Nueva Ecija produces the highest volume of rice in the country. "You know that Nueva Ecija is the rice granary of the Philippines, and this will help reduce transport costs; by lowering transport costs, rice prices will remain stable," Marcos said during a chance interview. The president also said the CLLEX expansion, which is expected to serve about 11,500 vehicles daily, would be toll-free until December 2026. He said that lower logistical expenses were critical in preventing price increases in essential goods, particularly food, which were often affected by rising fuel prices. "We are continuing to do this to make travel easier for people and to finally open it, because if you look at our highways, they mostly run north-south," Marcos said. "Once this is completed — once we reach the east coast of Luzon — this will be the first major east-west highway to pass through," he added. The newly opened segment extends CLLEX from the San Juan Interchange in Aliaga, Nueva Ecija, to the Cabanatuan exit, completing Phase 1 of the 29.2-kilometer, four-lane expressway. The CLLEX Phase 1 is a P10-billion project funded through official development assistance from the Japan International Cooperation Agency. Once completed, CLLEX will improve access across Luzon, decongest major roads like the MacArthur Highway,

and make it easier to move goods and people throughout the region. Marcos said the project formed part of broader efforts to enhance transportation networks, particularly by developing east-west corridors.

- [Iran's help eyed to safeguard tankers bound for Philippines](#) (2026-03-31 16:17)

MANILA will initiate diplomatic talks with Tehran to ensure the safe passage of fuel shipments bound for the Philippines passing through the Strait of Hormuz, a key global oil transit route that Iran has shut down as a result of the war in the Middle East. Palace Press Officer Claire Castro said President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. has directed the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) to take the lead on the matter as part of efforts to safeguard the country's energy supply. "The president has already instructed Foreign Secretary Tess Lazaro... she will speak with the Iranian ambassador, most likely tomorrow. If not, by next week," Castro said in Filipino at a Palace briefing. The planned engagement comes amid escalating hostilities following US and Israeli attacks on Iran that began Feb. 28, and Iranian retaliatory strikes on targets on the US and its allies in the Gulf region. In response to the US attacks, Iran has closed the Strait of Hormuz, one of the world's most critical choke points for the energy trade, with around one-fifth of global oil supply passing through it daily. Iranian attacks in the strait have effectively cut off access by tankers to and from oil-exporting Gulf states. The closure has already raised global oil prices dramatically and severely reduced its supply. Energy-importing countries like the Philippines are particularly vulnerable to such shocks, as the country relies heavily on imported petroleum products to meet domestic demand. Asia faces the gravest fallout from the war on Iran and is confronting a major energy crisis, a global maritime analytics firm warned Tuesday. "We think Asia will, for now, be the ones suffering the most," Kpler president Jean Maynier said. He added that the continent did not have enough energy resources of its own to cover the gap, saying: "It will not be enough in China, it will not be enough to cover in big countries like the Philippines or Indonesia. So it's a real energy crisis." Castro said no specific Philippine-bound vessels have been identified as being at risk so far, and did not say if there were tankers on the way. "The secretary has not mentioned any specific vessels yet," she said. The administration has been implementing a series of interventions, including diversifying fuel sources, securing existing supply contracts, rolling out fuel subsidies for key sectors, and enforcing energy conservation measures across government offices. Meanwhile, Castro said the government is still consolidating the total cost of its response to the crisis. "We are currently gathering reports from all agencies. Most probably by next week we can provide the figures," she said. The Palace reiterated that maintaining unimpeded fuel flow remains a top priority as global uncertainties persist. Castro said Marcos' order to begin talks with Iran was made during a meeting with members of the Unified Package for Livelihoods, Industry, Food, and Transport (Uplift) Committee earlier this week, an inter-agency body created to address the national energy emergency earlier declared due to the war in the Middle East. Still, the government has high hopes of a positive outcome, given that "the Philippines has a good relationship with Iran." As part of efforts to diversify its sources of fuel, the country received its first delivery of more than 700,000 barrels of Russian crude oil last week, procured by Petron

Corp., the Philippines' only oil refiner, with additional 2.48 million barrels expected. Joint exploration a trap? Also on Tuesday, former Supreme Court Associate Justice Antonio Carpio warned that a joint Philippine-China joint oil and gas exploration could be a trap. "Joint development is a trap because joint development means, you go to the website of China, it says joint development means China owns the gas, the oil, all the natural resources," Carpio said in an interview during a visit to Pag-asa island. "China has [the] sovereign rights. That's from the point of view of China. So why will we accept that?" he added. Carpio visited Pag-asa Island to attend the groundbreaking ceremony of a Catholic church in the area. He first visited the disputed island 14 years ago when the Philippines was still preparing to contest China's nine-dash line. Even the Armed Forces of the Philippines reiterated that China is "not a reliable partner" in energy negotiations considering their coercive and aggressive actions in the West Philippine Sea (WPS) all recorded in video. In a recent interview with Bloomberg, President Marcos raised the possibility that the US and Israeli war against Iran could provide an "impetus" for the Philippines and China to strike a deal in jointly developing oil and gas resources in the contested WPS. The Chinese embassy in Manila earlier said China's "door to dialogue" on joint oil and gas development in the South China Sea remains open, but the Philippines must first "demonstrate sincerity" before negotiations can resume. Filipinos in Israel Meanwhile, the Philippine Embassy in Tel Aviv met with concerned Israeli agencies to safeguard the rights and welfare of Filipino workers and provide them the necessary aid amid the Middle East war. Philippine Ambassador to Tel Aviv Aileen Mendiola-Rau recently met with Eli Cohen, Israel Hotel Association president, to discuss the current situation of Filipino hotel workers. There are over 30,300 Filipinos in Israel, majority of whom work as caregivers. The rest are workers in hotels, agricultural students, and missionaries. The embassy on Saturday said Mendiola-Rau also appealed to Cohen to ensure the Filipino workers' "safety and well-being amid the ongoing conflict in Israel." "The meeting follows recent consultations with hotel workers and discussions with Filipino community leaders across Israel," the embassy posted on Facebook. The meeting "reaffirmed both sides' commitment to maintaining open communication and support systems for Filipino workers, including assistance in employment continuity and access to essential services," it added. The embassy also held a separate meeting with officials from the Israeli Population and Immigration Authority to discuss broader concerns affecting Filipino workers in Israel. The embassy earlier urged Filipinos to immediately go inside the "mamad" or bomb shelter as soon as they receive an emergency alert. "No action is required, as the updated expiration date is reflected in the system. These workers may re-enter Israel up to and including Apr. 30," it added. WITH PNA, AFP

- [DTI chief: Price increase likely after April 16](#) (2026-03-31 16:16)

MANUFACTURERS will defer price hikes on goods until April 16, Trade Secretary Cristina Roque said Tuesday. "There is no price increase for basic necessities and prime commodities until April 16. Definitely, we can expect some price increase after that but not for all, because we talked to various manufacturers and for basic necessities and prime commodities, there will be no price increases up to the end of April," Roque said in English and Filipino. On March 28, the

Trade chief announced that manufacturers and retailers have pledged not to increase the prices of goods until April 16. In her first meeting with them on March 16, 21 of them pledged to keep prices stable for 30 days, while others said they would go for 60 days. Roque said that she will be meeting with the manufacturers and retailers again after Holy Week. “The meetings will be weekly,” she said. Roque urged the public not to engage in panic-buying or hoarding, as the supply of food is adequate, and prices for basic necessities and prime commodities are stable. The DTI said that there are more than 200 basic necessities and prime commodities, including sardines, canned meat, milk, coffee, dairy products, bottled waters, cup noodles, candles, and bath soap. Roque warned that hoarders and businesses violating the Price Act would be prosecuted. Meanwhile, Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. dismissed concerns over a possible food price spike, saying extreme projections linked to rising oil prices are unlikely and do not reflect government interventions. The Agriculture chief said the scenarios presented to the Senate, which assumed that crude oil prices would average \$200 per barrel for six months, were based on “extreme assumptions” and did not include mitigating measures. “The prices presented assumed the full impact of soaring crude,” he said. “They did not factor in government action, which we will undertake to protect Filipinos from an oil shock.” The DA said the US-Iran war in the Middle East threatens the flow of supply along the Strait of Hormuz, a critical route in the international trade of fuel and fertilizer. It noted that about 30 percent of the global urea trade and 20 percent of ammonia and phosphate flows pass through this waterway. Despite the global uncertainty, the agency maintains that domestic food supply and prices remain stable. It noted that pork inventories remain sufficient, while poultry production exceeds demand, leading to lower farmgate prices. Tiu Laurel said that the Fertilizer and Pesticide Authority has been authorized to make emergency fertilizer purchases. He added that state-owned firms like the Planters Products Inc. can help ramp up imports, noting that it imported a total of 120,000 bags of 14-14-14 complete fertilizer from Vietnam in October. The DA is also looking at alternatives, such as organic fertilizer, including chicken manure, to reduce the domestic agriculture sector’s reliance on petroleum-based fertilizers. Tiu Laurel also warned against unfair trade practices, cautioning traders and suppliers against hoarding and profiteering amid the crisis. “We are ready to apply the full force of the law against anyone who seeks to exploit the situation,” he said.

- [Holy Wednesday: a day of betrayal](#) (2026-03-31 16:15)

HOLY Wednesday, or “Miyerkules Santo” as it is locally called, marks the day Judas Iscariot conspired to betray Jesus Christ. In John 12:3, Mary of Bethany anointed Jesus’ feet with expensive perfume while he was at the table with his disciples. Some of the disciples questioned why the perfume was not sold to help the poor, but Judas Iscariot objected because he wanted the money for himself. After this, Judas went to the Sanhedrin and offered to betray Jesus in exchange for money and began looking for the right time to do so. In Matthew 26:14-16, Judas agreed to hand Jesus over to the chief priests for 30 pieces of silver. During the Passover preparations, Jesus told his disciples that one of them would betray him. When Judas asked if it was him, Jesus replied, “You have said so.” In his homily at the Manila Cathedral, Fr. Rolly

delacruz highlighted how Jesus, instead of expressing pain or anger, saw the goodness in Judas' betrayal. "Jesus is teaching us today to look at it from a positive viewpoint," delacruz said. Delacruz emphasized Jesus' surprising response. "When Judas left to go to the priests, Jesus said, 'Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him.'" As Filipino Catholics begin traveling home for Maundy Thursday and Good Friday — which are local holidays — Holy Wednesday reminds the faithful that, despite rising prices and conflict in the Middle East, Jesus' perspective teaches them to find something positive even in difficult times, delacruz said. "Many things, bad things, will happen — things that we do not want, things that we do not like. But Jesus is telling us today, look at the positive side," he said. He urged the faithful to adopt this mindset in their own lives, drawing inspiration from Jesus' ability to see glorification in the betrayal and denial by those closest to Him, delacruz said, encouraging Filipino Catholics to find hope and meaning in their own struggles.

- [Oil-thirsty Asian nations vying for Russian crude](#) (2026-03-31 16:14)

BANGKOK — Asian nations are increasingly competing for Russian crude oil as an energy crisis mounts amid the month-old war by the US and Israel against Iran, which has choked off roughly a fifth of the world's oil supply. Much of the oil from the mostly shut Strait of Hormuz was headed for Asia, hit hardest by recent energy shocks. Over the weekend, Iran-backed Houthi rebels entered the conflict, further threatening shipping. To shore up global crude oil supplies, the US has temporarily eased sanctions on Russian oil shipments already at sea — first for India, then for the rest of the world. Demand is rising in Asia while Russia is raking in billions of dollars. But experts say there is a limit to how much Moscow can boost its exports of crude oil, which is unrefined petroleum needed to make fuels like gasoline and diesel, and it is already exporting at a level close to its previous peak. In addition, Russia's 4-year-old full-scale invasion of Ukraine and recent drone attacks on its energy facilities by Kyiv are hurting its export capabilities. For desperate countries in Asia the opportunity is short-lived and shrinking, said Muyu Xu, a senior crude oil analyst at the global trade data firm Kpler. "The real problem is how much cargo is still available in this market," she said. Before the Iran war, China, India and Turkey were the main importers of Russian oil, flouting Western sanctions for a healthy discount. US and European Union sanctions were meant to economically hinder Russia after its invasion of Ukraine. But the US sanction waiver sent energy-hungry Southeast Asia into a flurry. This month, the Philippines, Indonesia, Thailand and Vietnam signaled new interest in Russian oil. Manila, a long-time US ally, imported Russian crude for the first time in five years — days after it declared an energy emergency. Others may follow, but will compete with China and India for roughly 126 million barrels still at sea, according to Kpler. India alone typically needs 5.5 million to 6 million barrels of oil per day. Analysts say Russia is unlikely to boost exports sharply. In March, flows were about 3.8 million barrels a day, above February's 3.2 million but still below the mid-2023 peak of 3.9 million. Xu said the crisis was a reminder of how quickly geopolitics can shift — sometimes driven by just a few decision-makers — making it hard for countries to plan ahead. She said "right now, really the priority is to ensure your supply and all the other considerations are secondary." Southeast Asian countries competing for the

dwindling amount of Russian crude oil at sea are likely hoping the US extends its sanction waiver beyond April, Xu added. The options are limited for these nations, and safer bets — like crude oil from the US, South America or West Africa — are too far for Asia, meaning shipments won't arrive for months. That leaves poorer nations scrambling. Airlines in the Philippines are weighing fuel rationing. Cash handouts are being rushed to those hit hardest, like transportation workers. On most days, lines at gas stations stretch for blocks. The nation of 117 million is an early warning for Southeast Asia. Before the war, the Philippines relied on the Middle East for nearly 97 percent of its total seaborne oil imports, according to Kpler data. The energy emergency declaration is a “new frontier” in its scale and magnitude, said Kairos Dela Cruz of the Institute for Climate and Sustainable Cities. “It will definitely drive people down even further in the poverty line,” he said. To ease energy shortfalls, the Philippines imported crude oil, a first since 2021. Other Southeast Asian nations are weighing similar options. Vietnamese Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh's March 23 visit to Russia included agreements on oil and gas cooperation, alongside nuclear energy, as rising diesel prices begin to squeeze Vietnam's manufacturing sector. In Indonesia, officials said “all countries are possible” partners as they shore up reserves. This includes Russia and the tiny oil and gas sultanate of Brunei, said Indonesian Energy Minister Bahlil Lahadalia. “When you don't have any other options, all options are on the table,” said Putra Adhiguna of the Jakarta-based Energy Shift Institute. While weighing similar moves, Thailand is not as desperate as the Philippines, said Jitsai Santaputra of the energy consultancy The Lantau Group in Bangkok. She added that Thailand will likely wait and see so long as the impact is limited. But it's growing. Fuel prices in Thailand jumped on March 26 after caps and subsidies were lifted, with most fuels rising about 20 US cents per liter, with diesel up roughly 18 percent — a hit to industry and transportation that risks pushing up the price of other goods. Defying Western sanctions, China and India were major Russian crude oil customers before the US and Israel attacked Iran on Feb. 28. An additional advantage for India was having US sanctions on Russian crude oil removed about a week before other countries. “They took that chance and snapped up quite many cargoes,” Xu said. By the time US President Donald Trump allowed everybody else to buy, she said it was “already a bit too late because most of the cargo had already been ordered” by China and India. Even with the headstart, Kpler data shows India's crude oil imports from Russia probably aren't enough to offset the lack of supplies from the Middle East. Its oil imports from Russia jumped to roughly 1.9 million barrels a day in March, from about 1 million barrels before the Iran war. Before that conflict, India imported around 2.6 million barrels per day of crude oil from the Middle East. That may not be enough, with the approach of peak summer energy demand — driven by travel, agriculture and freight needs — especially as emergency oil stockpiles run down, said Duttatreya Das of the think tank Ember. He added that short-term buys cover only a few days of supply, leaving any gap hard to fill without extra shipments from the US or Canada. “I don't know how the shortfall will be met,” he said. Despite being the fifth-largest crude producer and pushing clean energy, China still has strong oil demand from its 1.4 billion people. But it also has built a vast oil stockpile. It has about 1.2 billion barrels of onshore crude inventories, Kpler estimates. That is nearly four months of its overall seaborne crude imports, which cushion short term impacts from the

war. China sourced about 13 percent of its seaborne crude from Iran, according to Kpler, and roughly 20 percent from Russia, said financial data group LSEG. With ample reserves and deep pockets, analysts say some Russian shipments bound for China could be diverted to more desperate countries. "Russia emerges as a major winner from the entire conflict," said Sam Reynolds of the US-based Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis. Given the energy crisis, speed of delivery and temporarily lower prices, he said Asia has "a much larger incentive to import Russian oil." "We can argue whether there's a moral dilemma there, but I think it's a reflection of the fact that countries are going to do whatever they need to to protect their energy security," he said.

- [House to review oil deregulation law](#) (2026-03-31 16:13)

THE House of Representatives is set to review the Oil Deregulation Law. "Yes, definitely, that is included," Marikina 2nd District Rep. Miro Quimbo, chairman of the House Committee on Ways and Means, said in Filipino and English in a virtual media interview Tuesday. The upcoming joint House committee hearings are aimed at helping Filipinos amid the war in the Middle East. "I think it's very clear to us that, you know, a totally unregulated [oil] industry like ours — I mean, it's great for First World countries. It works there because, deregulated is really good because they are competing among themselves," Quimbo said. "And in fact, you see it in some retail areas, they are really competing for lower prices. But the basic component that is missing is that you have a very strong law enforcement mechanism relative to making sure that competition actually takes place." "In other countries, that is already very much alive; their antitrust, they really penalize, their ability to look into the bank accounts, into the records of these companies for them to see whether there seems to be price fixing or price collusion," he said. Quimbo said the country's "anti-competition culture" was still "very immature," so "that is what we need to give a second look at." Speaker Faustino Dy III ordered joint House committee hearings to craft measures that would assist Filipinos amid the effects of the conflict in the Middle East. The hearings will be conducted after Holy Week even as the House is on a break. The chamber adjourned session March 28 and will resume May 4. During Cauayan's 25th cityhood anniversary Monday night, Dy, the congressional representative of Isabela's 6th District, said the country was "very dependent" on petroleum products and should have alternatives. In an interview Tuesday, Quimbo said there were "many renewable sources of energy in the Philippines." "I think what we need to do is how do we encourage the private sector... to invest more in renewables," he said. "We need to gather information so we can come up with the right recommendations." The hearings will be conducted by the House committees on energy; agriculture and food; aquaculture and fisheries; foreign affairs; ways and means; labor and employment; transportation; information and communications technology; economic affairs; social services; trade and industry; overseas workers affairs; and appropriations. "We are holding these joint hearings to make sure that the initiatives of the legislative branch are coordinated with the executive and are properly targeted and forward-looking," Dy said in a statement Monday.

- Competency-based HR in govt backed THE Civil Service Commission (CSC) has issued a resolution that aims to support government agencies in transitioning from traditional, process-driven personnel management to a modern, competency-based human resource system. “The reform ultimately aims to institutionalize competency-based HR systems across the bureaucracy,” CSC Chairman Marilyn Barua-Yap said of Resolution 2600005, noting it would pave the way for the creation of comprehensive guidelines for implementing Competency-Based Human Resource Management Systems (CBHRMS). She said the new policy would help agencies “to move beyond paper-based, compliance-focused human resource practices and adopt an outcome-oriented framework anchored on clearly defined competencies for recruitment, performance management, rewards and recognition, and employee development.” Government agencies are expected to identify core, leadership, and technical/functional competencies to ensure that the most qualified candidates are selected for government positions, Barua-Yap said. She added the new policy would be applied to constitutional offices, national government agencies, local government units, government-owned and controlled corporations with original charters, and state universities and colleges. Barua-Yap said the new guidelines were anchored on earlier CSC competency frameworks issued in 2012 and 2015 and support agencies’ progression under the Program to Institutionalize Meritocracy and Excellence in Human Resource Management. Establishing a CBHRMS is a core requirement for agencies seeking to attain Maturity Level 3 under Prime-HRM, where HR systems are expected to be fully integrated and strategically aligned with organizational goals, she said. ARLIE CALALO (2026-03-31 16:12)

THE Civil Service Commission (CSC) has issued a resolution that aims to support government agencies in transitioning from traditional, process-driven personnel management to a modern, competency-based human resource system. “The reform ultimately aims to institutionalize competency-based HR systems across the bureaucracy,” CSC Chairman Marilyn Barua-Yap said of Resolution 2600005, noting it would pave the way for the creation of comprehensive guidelines for implementing Competency-Based Human Resource Management Systems (CBHRMS). She said the new policy would help agencies “to move beyond paper-based, compliance-focused human resource practices and adopt an outcome-oriented framework anchored on clearly defined competencies for recruitment, performance management, rewards and recognition, and employee development.” Government agencies are expected to identify core, leadership, and technical/functional competencies to ensure that the most qualified candidates are selected for government positions, Barua-Yap said. She added the new policy would be applied to constitutional offices, national government agencies, local government units, government-owned and controlled corporations with original charters, and state universities and colleges. Barua-Yap said the new guidelines were anchored on earlier CSC competency frameworks issued in 2012 and 2015 and support agencies’ progression under the Program to Institutionalize Meritocracy and Excellence in Human Resource Management. Establishing a CBHRMS is a core requirement for agencies seeking to attain Maturity Level 3 under Prime-HRM, where HR systems are expected to be fully integrated and

strategically aligned with organizational goals, she said.

- [Garcia plays down impeach complaint](#) (2026-03-31 16:11)

COMMISSION on Elections (Comelec) Chairman George Erwin Garcia on Tuesday dismissed an impeachment complaint filed against him, saying the allegations had been previously addressed. Garcia was referring to the impeachment complaint filed before the House of Representatives by lawyers Aldrige Marvin Acheron and Sikini Labastilla. The complaint was based on Comelec's alleged use of a different source code in automated counting machines (ACMs), the presence of an unauthorized intermediary server, a single private IP address, and the systematic and selective implementation of campaign finance laws. "These issues or accusations are not new and have been clarified repeatedly by the Comelec in a manner understandable to the public," he said, stressing that the commission would again respond for the benefit of the nation. In a statement, Comelec maintained that the software used in the May 12, 2025, national and local elections underwent proper review and certification. It said version 3.5.0 of the ACM source code was scrutinized during the local source code review and later certified by an independent international testing body. The poll body also rejected claims of an "intermediary server," clarifying that the facility referred to as "Data Center 3" is not a server but a location housing five independent transparency servers operated by political parties, citizens' arms and media organizations. These servers, Comelec said, receive election results directly from precinct-level machines. On the issue of modems sharing a single private IP address during the 2022 elections, Comelec said the configuration complied with technical standards and had no impact on the accuracy or integrity of transmitted results. "There is no legal requirement mandating unique IP addresses for each device," it pointed out. The commission also denied allegations of bias in enforcing campaign finance laws, stressing that its decisions were grounded in existing laws and jurisprudence, as well as rulings of the Supreme Court. It explained that Comelec's decisions in the cases of Sens. Francis Escudero and Rodante Marcoleta, concerning campaign donations, are supported by law. It noted that the cases cited in the complaint remain under review and may still be elevated to the Supreme Court. "These cases involving Senators Escudero and Marcoleta underwent very thorough study and discussion by various Comelec departments and offices before a decision was made. The process on these case issues is not yet final and can still be elevated to the Supreme Court," it said. "There is no truth whatsoever to the allegation that the Comelec favors senators regarding the implementation of campaign finance laws. In fact, Comelec Chairman Garcia inhibited himself from two of these cases to avoid any conflict of interest and to ensure the investigation was unaffected until the results were released," it further said. Comelec said it is prepared to face the impeachment complaint and reaffirmed its commitment to uphold "free, fair, honest, orderly, credible, and transparent elections."

- [Go backs fuel excise tax suspension](#) (2026-03-31 16:10)

SEN. Bong Go expressed support for the government's move to allow the suspension of fuel excise taxes amid rising prices. The senator urged authorities to expand relief measures beyond

public utility vehicle drivers to include other affected sectors. On March 25, the executive branch enacted Republic Act 12316, which authorizes the suspension or reduction of excise taxes on petroleum products when global oil prices breach certain thresholds. The law grants the president flexibility to respond more quickly to volatile oil markets upon recommendation of economic managers. An executive order declaring a state of national energy emergency has also been issued, enabling a whole-of-government approach to stabilize fuel supply and mitigate rising costs. Go welcomed the tax suspension measure, describing it as a necessary step to ease immediate pressure on consumers. However, he emphasized that government intervention must go further. “We support measures that can ease the costs of drivers, but they should not stop there. Many other sectors are affected and need help as well,” he said. He warned that rising oil prices trigger a “domino effect” across the economy, driving up transportation fares, food prices, and other basic goods. “When oil prices rise, it affects fares, food, and daily needs. The scope of assistance should be broadened,” he added. The senator’s remarks came after a netizen posted on his official Facebook page, saying that while transport operators receive targeted assistance, other groups equally burdened by high fuel costs remain excluded. In another post, a balut (duck egg) vendor noted that higher fuel costs reduced their daily earnings. The senator said that overlooked sectors, such as street vendors and fisherfolk, should be included in relief efforts.

- [LTFRB summons 8 bus firms over alleged illegal fare hikes](#) (2026-03-31 16:09)

THE Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB) has issued show cause orders against eight bus companies accused of implementing unauthorized fare increases, warning of possible suspension or cancellation of their operating permits. LTFRB Chairman Vigor Mendoza II said the firms, some of which operate routes to the Bicol Region, were directed to explain why their Certificates of Public Convenience (CPCs) should not be revoked. “We understand the challenges that bus companies and other operators of public utility vehicles are facing now, but these challenges must never be used as a reason or as an excuse to violate existing regulations at the expense of commuters,” Mendoza said. The companies have 10 days from receipt to justify their actions after allegedly imposing additional charges due to rising fuel costs without LTFRB approval. They were also ordered to immediately stop collecting unauthorized fares. A hearing has been set on April 23. The LTFRB warned that failure to submit an explanation or attend the hearing would be treated as a waiver, which could lead to penalties, including a fine of P5,000. The regulator earlier approved a fare adjustment for public utility vehicles, including buses, but its implementation was suspended upon the directive of President Ferdinand Marcos Jr., citing the impact of rising oil prices on commuters. The LTFRB added it has deployed “mystery riders” to monitor compliance and detect overcharging. It also urged passengers to report incidents of illegal fare increases as part of its enforcement efforts.

- [Program to send US students to PH schools](#) (2026-03-31 16:08)

A CONSORTIUM has been launched to allow US universities to send students to the Philippines for short-term courses, semester exchanges, and faculty-led programs. The Consortium for Study Abroad in the Philippines (CSAP) was launched last March 24 in a ceremony led by the Philippine-American Educational Foundation (Fulbright Philippines), Commission on Higher Education (CHED), Department of Tourism, Department of Foreign Affairs, and US Embassy in the Philippines. The initiative will involve 15 of the Philippines' top Higher Education Institutions. The founding members include the Ateneo de Davao University, the University of the Philippines (UP) Los Baños, UP Visayas, and Silliman University. The US Embassy said CSAP aims to attract more American students by promoting Philippine universities as destinations for study and cultural immersion, positioning the country as a hub for international education. Fulbright Philippines Executive Director July Amador III said CSAP is a "unified national gateway built on four strategic pillars: Standardized Academic Rigor, Uniform Duty of Care, 'Living Laboratories,' and Streamlined Mobility." "By providing this structured pathway, we ensure that students and scholars gain not only global-standard academic knowledge but also a deeper appreciation of the cultures and communities that shape our societies," Amador added. US Embassy Counselor for Public Affairs Jessica Simon said that educational exchanges are an important cornerstone of Philippine-US relations, especially with the two countries celebrating the 80th year of diplomatic relations in 2026. "Beyond academic growth, at its core, welcoming US students and faculty for cultural exchange and collaborations unite people and cultures. The United States remains committed to deepening our partnership with the Philippines through scholarships and exchanges to empower our people, develop our workforce, and prosper together," Simon said. CHED Chairman Shirley Agrupis noted that global education now runs on reliability and that partner institutions "need to know that programs are comparable, credits can be transferred, and students will be supported from admission to completion."

- [Marcos to spend Holy Week in Ilocos](#) (2026-03-31 16:06)

PRESIDENT Ferdinand Marcos Jr. on Tuesday said he would spend Holy Week in his hometown, Ilocos Norte. "For the Holy Week, I will spend a few days in Ilocos Norte. And I will be back in Manila by the weekend," Marcos told reporters in Nueva Ecija. Marcos did not provide further details, but Palace Press Officer Claire Castro said the president would continue to monitor developments in Ilocos Norte during the Holy Week. "He will spend his Holy Week in Ilocos Norte with his family. There will be no vacation because our president will continue to monitor and give orders on what our government agencies need to do," Castro said in a press conference. Last year, Marcos, first lady Liza Araneta-Marcos, and their sons, Joseph Simon and William Vincent, spent Maundy Thursday at Suba Beach in Ilocos Norte. In his Holy Week message, Marcos encouraged the public to renew their commitment to the faith, "inspired by selfless service" during the sacred season. "May this Holy Week strengthen our resolve to become a nation guided by faith, united in purpose, and inspired by selfless service," he said. Drawing from the life and sacrifice of Jesus Christ, Marcos urged the Filipino faithful to renew their commitment to God to love and serve one another, and to remain faithful even in

the face of trials. “The Passion of Christ reminds us that true greatness is not found in power, but in sacrifice; not in privilege, but in service; and not in comfort, but in the courage to carry the burdens of others,” he said. The president called on Filipinos to continue working together for the welfare of their families and to build stronger communities anchored on faith and shared responsibility. He expressed hope that the Lenten season would inspire Filipinos to act with compassion and extend help to those in need. “For in every act of compassion, every hand extended to those in need, and every sacrifice made for the good of others, we keep alive the spirit of His message,” he added. Marcos earlier declared April 2 and 3 as regular holidays in observance of Maundy Thursday and Good Friday.

- [CFO eyes specialized integration program](#) (2026-03-31 16:05)

THE Commission on Filipinos Overseas (CFO) has sought to enhance the integration of Filipino migrants into their new home or host country as the Filipino diaspora in Germany continues to grow and diversify. The commission said that newly arrived Filipinos in Germany would soon have access to specialized post-arrival integration activities to ease their transition into German society. The CFO recently partnered with the Goethe-Institut, a nonprofit German cultural organization, to synchronize its pre-departure and post-arrival efforts for Filipinos migrating to Germany or for those who will live there to work or study. There are about 45,000 Filipinos living and working in Germany. “The demographics have shifted. Today, the population includes a robust number of information technology professionals, hospitality workers, students, and Filipinos married to German nationals,” the CFO said on Tuesday. “Pre-departure and post-arrival mechanisms are considered vital for this demographic, which frequently grapples with language barriers and navigating complex social systems,” the CFO said in a statement. Under the proposed framework, CFO would tap Germany-based Filipino alumni of Goethe-Institut courses to conduct localized orientation and social integration activities for fresh arrivals. The agreement will soon be formalized through a memorandum of understanding, the CFO said. Under the proposed mechanism, the CFO would promote the Goethe-Institut’s language and pre-integration courses during its mandatory pre-departure orientation seminars. The Goethe-Institut would provide training to CFO orientation officers and counselors, embedding German cultural insights directly into the Philippine-based briefing seminars. Bernadette Tamayo

- [Transport group questions delayed oil subsidy release](#) (2026-03-31 16:04)

TRANSPORT group Manibela on Tuesday questioned the slow rollout of the government’s fuel subsidy program, saying only about P651 million of the P2.4 billion to P2.5 billion allocation has been distributed, as transport workers continue to bear the impact of rising fuel prices. In a statement, the group said more than 70 percent of the fund had yet to reach beneficiaries despite the urgent need for assistance among drivers and operators nationwide. Manibela said the subsidy had already been released to LandBank, but actual distribution remained slow in many areas. The group said assurances that the program was moving in the right direction were not enough if drivers and operators were still not feeling the assistance on the ground. It said

the sector needs a clear timeline, a complete list of beneficiaries, and full transparency in the release and use of the fund. “The transportation sector is calling for immediate action, accountability, and a clear explanation,” it said. The group said the fuel subsidy should reach legitimate beneficiaries in full and without delay, adding that the assistance should not be held back or stalled in the process. As of Monday, the Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board said P651.185 million has been distributed since March 17. Metro Manila received the biggest share at P181.278 million, followed by Calabarzon and Central Luzon, while LTRFB Chairman Vigor Mendoza II said regional offices were continuing validation to speed up the payout.

- [‘Gas-and-dash’ suspect surrenders to authorities](#) (2026-03-31 16:03)

THE Quezon City Police District (QCPD) said on Tuesday that the driver involved in the viral "gas-and-run" incident over the weekend has turned himself over to the city police. Identified as "Jefferson," 27, of San Jose Del Monte, Bulacan, he showed up Monday night at the La Loma Police Station, accompanied by family members, QCPD director BGen. Randy Glenn Silvio said. The suspect's surrender came after efforts by QCPD's Special Investigation Team, which conducted a thorough probe including forward and backward CCTV (closed-circuit television) tracking and coordination with concerned agencies, Silvio said. These efforts led to the identification of the vehicle and the person involved in the incident, which happened a few days ago at a gas station in Balintawak, where Jefferson requested a full tank of diesel worth P5,196, the QCPD chief added. To the shock of the pump attendant, who tried to catch him up but in vain, the suspect suddenly sped off without settling the fuel bill. The QCPD said it would pursue the filing of an estafa complaint before the City Prosecutor's Office against the suspect, who already apologized to the gas station management as he expressed remorse, citing high gasoline costs and low earnings.

- [Caloocan gives PUJ, tricycle drivers regular daily income](#) (2026-03-31 16:02)

CALOOCAN Mayor Dave Gonzalo Malapitan on Tuesday said that the local government has sealed a partnership with various tricycle and public utility jeepney (PUJ) transport groups based in the city to provide free rides for commuters. The collaboration with the local organizations of tricycle and jeepney drivers and operators would involve financial subsidies for them with the goal of sustaining their regular income and, at the same time, extending help to the affected commuters amid the unabated increase in fuel prices, Malapitan told The Manila Times. He said the city government forged a deal with several tricycle operators and drivers' associations (TODAs) to implement a "Libreng Sakay" program that would start on April 6 to provide free trips to local commuters. “We simply wanted to think of several measures, including this one, to alleviate the plight of the transportation sector due to the continuous fuel price hikes in local gas stations and, at the same time, help our affected commuters,” the mayor said. According to the city's Public Information Office (PIO), the program would be available during traffic rush hours — 7 a.m. to 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. to 7 p.m., wherein participating TODA members would stand to receive P695 for four hours of service per day. Malapitan reiterated the local

government's full support to provide assistance to city-based public transportation providers as he ensured that additional programs would be implemented in anticipation of further surges in fuel prices. The younger Malapitan said similar schemes would be carried out in the coming days involving jeepney organizations. The PIO said interested applicants may inquire with their respective transport groups' associations.

- [Manila provides P500 more aid to PUJ drivers](#) (2026-03-31 16:01)

PUBLIC utility jeepney (PUJ) drivers who joined the Manila government's free ride program will receive an additional P500 in daily cash assistance, on top of the P3,000 daily minimum subsidy given by the city government, Mayor Isko Moreno said Tuesday. Speaking at a Facebook live broadcast, Moreno said the increase was due to the P661,000 in savings generated from the program's first day of operations on Monday. He said that rather than the money being returned to the city, it will be redistributed directly to drivers. He added that this increase in assistance aims to help drivers cope with rising fuel costs, as diesel prices have gone up by P11 to P12 per liter. "Instead of putting that back in the government, we will give it to you instead, in response to the increase in crude oil prices yesterday and in the coming days," he said in Filipino. "To our drivers, I will increase your daily wage by P500 so that the P12 increase in the price of crude oil yesterday will be offset today and in the days to come," he added. The increased subsidy of P3,500 will apply for the remaining days of the program — Tuesday, March 31, and the following Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday after Holy Week, which marks the end of the free ride program. Moreno further revealed that on the first day of the program, 129,665 passengers were served, with 1,038 jeepneys participating across the city's six districts.

- [Complaint filed vs. Herbosa, 16 others](#) (2026-03-31 14:13)

MANILA, Philippines - A graft complaint was filed on Tuesday at the Office of the Ombudsman against Department of Health (DoH) Secretary Teodoro Herbosa and 16 other people. The 16 were Health Undersecretary Randy Escolango, Health Undersecretary Gloria Balboa, David Masiado Jr., Anna Marie Celina Garfin, Adriano Suba-an, Cherylle Gavino, Maria Joyce Ducusin, Hardy Dumawing, Carmela Granada, Jan Derek Junio, Carmina Paz Vera, Jessa Joy Malipot, Mark Anthony Dizon, Liezl Fernandez, Mary Grace Bautista, and Jennifer Rabino. The complaint, anonymously filed, accused them of violation of Section 3(e) of the Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act "by causing direct injury to the government through evident bad faith and gross negligence." As of early 2026, the complaint said, the DoH "incurred an actual, irreparable loss of" P68 million "due to commodities expiring while stagnant in the National Warehouse." According to the complaint, medications worth P68 million which were under family planning and mental health programs had expiration dates ranging from Dec. 2025 to Feb./Mar. 2026. "Moreover, the National Immunization Program reports an undelivered balance of Php 1,319,099,880.00, representing a staggering failure to utilize said life-saving vaccines", it read. The complaint said that on Jan. 22, 2026, the National Inventory Report "confirmed that" P1,319,099,880 "in vaccines remained undelivered".

- [ICRC urges parties in Middle East conflict to follow rules of war](#) (2026-03-31 13:54)

MANILA, Philippines—The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) on Monday called on parties involved in the Middle East conflict to “respect the rules of war,” stating they are “eroding the foundation of civilian life.” In a statement, the ICRC said if the parties of the conflict continue to disregard the rules of war, civilians will continue to suffer profound consequences that could “outlast the current conflict.” “Respect for the rules of war reduces the consequences for civilians, especially during military operations. All parties, regardless of the side they are on, are bound by international humanitarian law (IHL), and all states have an obligation to respect and ensure respect for IHL, even if their adversary does not,” it said. The IHL mandates that civilians, medical personnel, aid workers, the wounded, and prisoners of war must be treated humanely. According to reports from HRANA, a US-based rights group, 3,461 people have been killed since the war erupted over a month ago. Of that number, 1,551 were civilians, and 236 were children. “At a time of escalating needs and tightening humanitarian budgets, the ICRC and other organizations are being forced to adapt to disrupted supply chains that are undermining their operations. Meanwhile, several countries already burdened by humanitarian crises must now also contend with rising fuel prices and increasing operational costs,” the ICRC said.

- [House review of oil deregulation law on the table](#) (2026-03-31 13:53)

MANILA, Philippines - Reviewing the Oil Deregulation Law is on the table at the House of Representatives. "Yes, definitely, that is included", Marikina 2nd District Rep. Miro Quimbo, chairman of the House Committee on Ways and Means, said in Filipino and English in a virtual media interview on Tuesday on the coming joint House committee hearings aimed at helping Filipinos amid the conflict in the Middle East. "I think it's very clear to us that, you know, a totally unregulated [oil] industry like ours--I mean, it's great for first world countries. It works there because, like I say, deregulated is really good because they are competing among themselves. And in fact, you see it in some retail areas, they are really competing for lower prices. But the basic component that is missing is that you have a very strong law enforcement mechanism relative to making sure that competition actually takes place", he said. "In other countries, that is already very much alive, their antitrust, they really penalize, their ability to look into the bank accounts, into the records of these companies for them to see whether there seems to be price fixing or price collusion", he said. Quimbo said the country's "anti-competition culture" was still "very immature" so "that is what we need to give a second look at."

- [Minor seeks Marcos help vs abusive officials in social media post, gets response from president](#) (2026-03-31 13:31)

MANILA, Philippines — President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. on Tuesday took to social media to respond to the cry for help of a minor in Camarines Sur to end the supposed abuses of a village official. An 11-year-old girl last March 30 posted a letter addressed to Marcos on the Facebook page of Redeemer Homeless Mission and sought his help to hold accountable an abusive “kagawad” or councilor. She narrated how the son and aide of the village official allegedly raped and impregnated one of her friends in November 2022 and February 2023. “As a child, I

have watched this Kagawad threaten us, cut and steal our electrical wires so we have no electricity, and cut and steal the wires to our balon (well) so we have no water,” she wrote. “Many of the families here stay in survival mode because government people make life very difficult,” she added. She also shared her fear of not having a bright future because of the impunity of the elected officials who were supposed to serve and protect them. “Question, Mr. President: How will we read if we are being raped? How will we read if our own government people cut our electrical wire so we have no lights?” she asked. “We are kids, we are not involved in your political parties. I just want to go to school without being raped. So, can you please help us?” she added. Marcos, who shared the letter that brought him close to tears and made him “very angry” in the comments, vowed to send help right away. “I am sending policemen to you and your sisters to protect you and to find anyone who has hurt any of you. I will make sure that you will be able to continue reading and studying as much as you want,” the chief executive said. “You are a very brave, intelligent and very kind girl and I will make sure to help you and your sisters in any way you need,” he added. The Palace has yet to confirm or release details if Marcos’ order had already been carried out.

- [Marcos approves P50/kilo price cap on imported rice](#) (2026-03-31 13:01)

MANILA, Philippines- President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. on Tuesday said he would issue an executive order to impose a P50 price cap on every kilo of imported well-milled rice. The move was based on the recommendation of the National Price Coordinating Council, a government body responsible for coordinating, monitoring, and stabilizing the prices of basic necessities and prime commodities. “When the price of oil goes up, food prices follow. That’s what we don’t want to happen. The National Price Coordinating Council recommended a price cap of P50 per kilo for imported well-milled rice, and we will issue an executive order to implement this as soon as possible,” Marcos said following a meeting of the Unified Package for Livelihoods, Industry, Food, and Transport committee. The President said that currently, the price of basic necessities and prime commodities remained at the suggested retail price levels, including rice. He said the government was working to control the prices of 205 commodities in the midst of the current energy emergency. “We continue to engage manufacturers and retailers to hold off price increases until next month,” he added.

- [Over 100K police deployed to secure Holy Week](#) (2026-03-31 12:47)

MANILA, Philippines — Over 100,000 police personnel will be deployed to secure peace and order, faster emergency response, and ensure public safety during the Holy Week, Gen. Jose Melencio Nartatez Jr. Philippine National Police (PNP) chief, said on Tuesday. Transportation Acting Secretary Giovanni Lopez said at least five million travelers were expected to flock to terminals, seaports and airports. At the Ninoy Aquino International Airport, 150,000 passengers per day are expected, three million at the Paranaque Integrated Terminal Exchange and 2.6 million more in seaports nationwide. Local Government Secretary Jonvic Remulla said the joint forces of police, local government and transport sector would ensure that roads were obstruction-free. Nartatez said PNP personnel were set to provide assistance to relevant

government agencies in clearing obstructions on the road including traffic flow, direction and control among others. Remulla encouraged everyone to call the PNP's Unified 911 hotline for any emergency on crime, health or fire situations as response is expected in five minutes or less. "We are eyeing zero focus crimes at least during Good Friday and zero deaths on road accidents," Nartatez said.

- [‘Asia to suffer most from Iran war energy crisis’](#) (2026-03-31 11:57)

SINGAPORE — Asia faces the gravest fallout from the war on Iran and is confronting a major energy crisis, a global maritime analytics firm warned in an interview with Agence France-Presse on Tuesday. "We think Asia will, for now, be the ones suffering the most," Kpler president Jean Maynier told AFP at the company's offices in Singapore. He said the continent did not have enough energy resources of its own to cover the gap, adding: "It will not be enough in China, it will not be enough to cover in big countries like the Philippines or Indonesia. So it's a real energy crisis." Maynier said the impact of Iran's closure of the Strait of Hormuz was already visible in countries like the Philippines, where the government has declared a national energy emergency. "It's really bad for Asia and we are not optimistic if the event continues," said Maynier. "We hope at some point that politicians will find a solution." Brussels-based Kpler, which was founded in 2014 and owns the MarineTraffic website, is considered one of the foremost data analytics and ship-tracking agencies in the world. It has been keeping a close eye on the Strait of Hormuz since the United States and Israel's February 28 attack on Iran. Seventeen commodities vessels crossed the the strait over the weekend, 12 of them on Saturday, making it one of the busiest days for crossings since March 1, according to Kpler. As of 1700 GMT on Monday, commodities vessels had made just 196 crossings of the waterway this month, a huge decrease from before the war. Of those, 120 were by oil tankers and gas carriers and most were travelling east out of the strait.

- [Marcos approves release of additional P1.28B support for transport workers](#) (2026-03-31 11:14)

MANILA, Philippines — President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. on Tuesday announced the release of an additional P1.38 billion to support transport workers impacted by skyrocketing fuel costs. In a video message, Marcos said distribution of the additional assistance would be rolled out starting next week. "More than 256,000 transport workers in Metro Manila have already received P5,000 in cash assistance. There is still P1.28 billion to be distributed. Nationwide distribution will begin on April 6," he said in Filipino. The cash aid covers drivers and operators of modern and traditional jeepneys, UV Express, passenger and point-to-point buses, Transport Network Vehicle Service (TNVS) partners, taxis, tricycles, multicabs, and delivery services. The chief executive noted that P2.5 billion in fuel subsidies was initially allocated for the more than 1.4 million driver-beneficiaries and unit operators. The fuel subsidy distribution is only one of the government's several initiatives to soften the blow of rising pump prices triggered by hostilities in the Middle East. Other mitigating measures the government has implemented include a 50-percent fare discount for LRT-2 and MRT-3; free rides in Metro Manila, Metro Cebu,

and Metro Davao; and toll discounts for jeepneys, buses, and freight food transport in the Northern Luzon Expressway (NLEX), Southern Luzon Expressway (SLEX), and STAR Tollway.

- [Manila grants additional P500 aid to jeepney drivers in free ride program](#) (2026-03-31 11:06)

MANILA, Philippines — Jeepney drivers who joined the Manila government's free ride program will receive an additional P500 in daily cash assistance, on top of the P3,000 minimum subsidy given by the city government, Mayor Isko Moreno announced Tuesday. Speaking at a Facebook live broadcast, Moreno said the increase was due to the P661,000 in savings generated from the program's first day of operations on Monday. He added that the increase in assistance aimed to help drivers cope with rising fuel costs, as diesel prices have gone up by P11 to P12 per liter.

- [Makati announces road closures, rerouting on Good Friday](#) (2026-03-31 07:36)

MANILA, Philippines — The Makati Public Safety Department will implement road closures and traffic rerouting on Good Friday. The city said traffic adjustments in the villages of Poblacion and Guadalupe Viejo for would be in effect from 5 p.m. to 11 p.m. A portion of J.P. Rizal Avenue, from Pasong Tirad Street to Makati Avenue, will be temporarily converted into a two-way road from April 2 to April 5, covering Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Black Saturday and Easter Sunday. Normal traffic flow will resume at 12:01 a.m. on Monday, April 6, according to the city advisory. The city also said several streets in village Poblacion were closed last week due to the construction of kubols or kalbaryos by various groups recognized by St. Peter and Paul Parish Church. The roads listed for closure are: Gen. Luna Street — portion from P. Burgos Street to Mercado Street Enriquez Street — from Don Pedro Street to Ferminia Street San Marcos Street — from Pagulayan Street to P. Burgos Street San Juan Street — from Pagulayan Street to P. Burgos Street Don Pedro Street — portion from Gabaldon Street to Mandalac Street Guanzon Street — from P. Burgos Street to Makati Avenue San Mateo Street — portion from D.M. Rivera Street to P. Gomez Street Agno Street — portion from D.M. Rivera Street to P. Gomez Street Doña Epifania Street — from A. Mabini Street to Agno Street Ilaya Street — portion from A. Mabini Street to J.P. Rizal Street Don Pedro Street — portion from A. Mabini Street to Villena Street Albert Street — portion from Villena Street to Palma Street P. Gomez Street — north side, from J.P. Rizal Street to Zamora Street P. Gomez Street — Hagdang Bato whole block San Agustin Street — from P. Burgos Street to P. Gomez Street Quintos Street — portion from Santiago Street to Singian Street Molina Street — from Quintos Street to Singian Street Zenaida Street — from E. Zobel Street to F. Zobel Street Bagong Diwa Street — from M.L. Quezon Street to Pertierra Street Ma. Aurora Extension Street — from Pertierra Street to Ma. Aurora Street Osmeña Street — from M.L. Quezon Street to Bridge Service Road or P. Burgos Street For light vehicles, cars and SUVs coming from the Guadalupe area or westbound and heading toward Makati City Hall, Circuit and Delpan Street in Manila, motorists will be rerouted through Estrella Street, Rockwell Drive, Kalayaan Avenue, Makati Avenue, Jupiter Street or Sen. Gil J. Puyat Avenue, then N. Garcia Street before rejoining J.P. Rizal Avenue. Public utility jeepneys, public utility vehicles, and large or

small trucks with six wheels and up coming from the same area will be redirected through the West Cloverleaf, EDSA southbound, Sen. Gil J. Puyat Avenue, Paseo de Roxas Avenue, Makati Avenue and N. Garcia Street before returning to J.P. Rizal Avenue. Motorists coming from Delpan Street eastbound may either pass through the temporarily converted two-way section of J.P. Rizal Avenue toward the Makati City Hall area, then proceed to N. Garcia Street and Sen. Gil J. Puyat Avenue, or take Pasong Tirad Street, Kalayaan Avenue, N. Garcia Street and Sen. Gil J. Puyat Avenue toward their destinations. The Makati Public Safety Department advised motorists to plan their trips ahead, expect delays in affected areas, and take alternate routes to avoid congestion.

- [Caloocan gives jeepney, tricycle drivers daily income to provide free ride to commuters](#) (2026-03-31 07:06)

MANILA, Philippines — Caloocan Mayor Dave Gonzalo Malapitan on Tuesday announced that the local government has sealed a partnership with tricycle and jeepney groups based in the city to provide free ride for the commuters in exchange for regular financial subsidy amid the unabated increase in fuel costs. Malapitan told The Manila Times that the city government initially forged a deal with several tricycle operators and drivers' associations (TODAs) to implement a 'Libreng Sakay' program that would start on April 6. "We simply wanted to think of several measures, including this one to alleviate the plight of the transportation sector due to the continuous fuel price hikes in local gas stations and at the same time, help our affected commuters," the city chief executive said. According to the city's Public Information Office (PIO), the program will be implemented during the rush hours – 7 a.m. to 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. — when participating drivers would receive P695 for four hours of service per day. The son of former long-time Caloocan mayor and now District 1 Rep. Oscar Malapitan reiterated the local government's full support to provide assistance to city-based public transportation providers as he ensured that additional programs would be implemented in anticipation of further surges in fuel prices. The younger Malapitan said similar schemes would be carried out in the coming days involving jeepney organizations. The PIO said interested applicants may inquire with their respective transport groups' associations.

- [Palace declares half-day WFH for govt workers on Holy Wednesday](#) (2026-03-31 06:54)

MANILA, Philippines — Malacañang on Tuesday announced a half-day work-from-home (WFH) setup for government employees on Wednesday in line with the country's observation of Holy Week. The Palace issued Memorandum Circular 116, "to allow them to travel to and from the different in the country" for the long break. Presidential Communications Office (PCO) Undersecretary Claire Castro noted that remote work would be from 8 a.m. until noon. "However, agencies whose functions involve the delivery of basic and health services, preparedness/response to disasters and calamities, and/or the performance of other vital services shall continue with their operations under usual working arrangements and render the necessary services," part of the circular read. The adoption of WFH arrangements and suspension of work for private companies and offices, meanwhile, are left to the discretion of

their respective employers, the circular further stated. Maundy Thursday and Good Friday are regular holidays while Black Saturday is a special non-working day, the Palace said.

- [AFP: China ‘not a reliable partner’ in oil exploration talks with PH](#) (2026-03-31 06:23)

MANILA, Philippines — The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) on Tuesday reiterated that China was “not a reliable partner” on the negotiating table despite ongoing talks on the possibility of joint oil and gas exploration in the South China Sea, particularly in areas within the Philippines’ exclusive economic zone (EEZ). The Philippines and China have “initial talks” on potential oil and gas explorations at the Bilateral Consultative Mechanism (BCM) on South China Sea meeting in Fujian, China, on March 28. The Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) said both sides took note of the progress and made “frank and thorough exchange of views” on the real situation in the disputed waters where Manila raised concern over Beijing’ s “unlawful” actions. “We view diplomacy and defense as two sides of the same coin. We support the Department of Foreign Affairs as they conduct the consultations, while at the same time, we will keep performing our mandate of patrolling the seas, of securing what is legally and rightfully ours,” Rear Admiral Roy Vincent Trinidad, AFP spokesman for the WPS, said in a press briefing at Camp Aguinaldo. “The Philippine Navy, Air Force, the Philippine Army, the entire AFP, amid all the negotiations being conducted by DFA will continue performing its mandate of patrolling our seas and securing our sovereignty and sovereign rights, bearing in mind that the Chinese Communist Party is not a reliable partner on the negotiating table,” Trinidad said. Trinidad said China’ s actions over the WPS throughout the years were a factual reference to not trust their pronouncements. “History will tell us that talk is different from action… Trust and confidence will always be based on transparency or truthfulness,” Trinidad said.

- [Comelec chief refutes impeachment complaint, denies election irregularities](#) (2026-03-31 04:38)

MANILA, Philippines — Commission on Elections (Comelec) Chairman George Erwin Garcia on Tuesday dismissed the impeachment complaint filed against him, saying the erroneous allegations had been previously addressed. The complaint before the House of Representatives by lawyers Adrige Marvin Aseron and Sikini Labastilla is based on the Comelec's alleged use of a different source code in the automated counting machines (ACM), the presence of an unauthorized intermediary server, a single private IP address, and the systematic and selective implementation of campaign finance laws. “These issues or accusations are not new and have been clarified repeatedly by the Comelec in a manner understandable to the public,” Garcia said, stressing that the Commission would again respond for the benefit of the Filipino nation. In a statement, Comelec maintained that the software used in the May 12, 2025 National and Local Elections (NLE) underwent proper review and certification. It said version 3.5.0 of the ACM source code was scrutinized during the Local Source Code Review and later certified by an independent international testing body. The poll body also rejected claims of an “intermediary server,” clarifying that the facility referred to as “Data Center 3” is not a server but a location housing five independent transparency servers operated by political parties, citizens’

arms, and media organizations. These servers, Comelec said, received election results directly from precinct-level machines. On the issue of modems sharing a single private IP address during the 2022 elections, Comelec said the configuration complied with technical standards and had no impact on the accuracy or integrity of transmitted results. "There is no legal requirement mandating unique IP addresses for each device," it pointed out. The Commission also denied allegations of bias in enforcing campaign finance laws, stressing that its decisions were grounded in existing laws and jurisprudence, as well as the ruling of the Supreme Court (SC).

- [Marcos orders talks with Iran on passage of PH-bound oil tankers through Strait of Hormuz](#) (2026-03-31 04:14)

MANILA, Philippines — President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. has directed the Department of Affairs (DFA) to start negotiations with Iran to allow the safe passage of Philippine-bound oil tankers through the Strait of Hormuz, Malacañang announced on Tuesday. This is to ensure the steady delivery of oil to the country amid the hostilities in the Middle East. "According to DFA Secretary Tess Lazaro, we have good relations with Iran," Presidential Communications Office (PCO) Undersecretary Claire Castro said in Filipino in a Palace briefing. "That has already been ordered by the president. She will be meeting with the Ambassador of Iran, most probably by tomorrow or next week." Iran has closed down access to the Strait of Hormuz, where one-fifth of the world's oil supply passes, following attacks initiated by the United States and Iran ultimately shutting down access of tankers to and from oil-exporting Gulf states. Sen. Sherwin Gatchalian urged Marcos to "open high-level talks" with the Iranian government and remove its blockade of tankers bound for the Philippines, predominantly reliant of oil importation. Such "strategic coordination," the lawmaker noted, would ensure that the rising costs of goods, especially petroleum products, would not further burden many Filipinos.

- [CSC releases new policy for competency-based recruitment in govt](#) (2026-03-31 03:57)

MANILA, Philippines — The Civil Service Commission (CSC) issued a resolution to support government agencies in transitioning from traditional, process-driven personnel management to a modern, competency-based human resource system aimed at improving public service delivery. CSC Chairman Marilyn Barua-Yap said Resolution 2600005 would pave the way for comprehensive guidelines for implementing Competency-Based Human Resource Management Systems (CBHRMS). She said the new policy would serve as a reference for agencies "to move beyond paper-based, compliance-focused human resource (HR) practices and adopt an outcome-oriented framework anchored on clearly defined competencies for recruitment, performance management, rewards and recognition, and employee development." Government agencies are expected to identify core, leadership, and technical/functional competencies to ensure that the most qualified candidates are selected for government positions, Barua-Yap said. "The reform ultimately aims to institutionalize competency-based HR systems across the bureaucracy," the top CSC official added. The CSC said the new policy would be applied to constitutional offices, national government agencies, local government units, government-owned and controlled corporations with original charters,

and state universities and colleges. She said the new guidelines were anchored on CSC competency frameworks issued in 2012 and 2015 and support agencies' progression under the Program to Institutionalize Meritocracy and Excellence in Human Resource Management (PRIME-HRM). Establishing a CBHRMS is a core requirement for agencies seeking to attain Maturity Level 3 under PRIME-HRM, where HR systems are expected to be fully integrated and strategically aligned with organizational goals, the CSC chief stressed. The commission reiterated that institutionalizing competency-based HRM would enhance employee productivity, job satisfaction, service quality, and overall organizational performance.

- [Marcos to spend Holy Week in home province, urges renewal of commitment to faith](#) (2026-03-31 03:47)

MANILA, Philippines — President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. on Tuesday said he would spend Holy Week in his hometown, Ilocos Norte as he encouraged the public to renew their commitment to faith in his message. "For the Holy Week, I will spend a few days in Ilocos Norte. And I will be back in Manila by the weekend," Marcos told reporters in Nueva Ecija. Last year, Marcos, First Lady Liza Araneta-Marcos, and their sons, Joseph Simon and William Vincent spent Maundy Thursday at Suba Beach in Ilocos Norte. In his Holy Week message, Marcos encouraged the public to renew their commitment to the faith, "inspired by selfless service" during the sacred season. "May this Holy Week strengthen our resolve to become a nation guided by faith, united in purpose, and inspired by selfless service," he said.

- [Marcos opens new expressway in Nueva Ecija, announces free toll until Dec](#) (2026-03-31 02:54)

MANILA, Philippines — President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. on Tuesday led the opening of the Central Luzon Link Expressway (CLLEX) Contract Package 4 Aliaga-Cabanatuan Section, a four-lane segment expected to enhance connectivity across Central Luzon. Speaking to reporters, Marcos said the new CLLEX segment would not only cut travel time from Tarlac to Cabanatuan City but also help reduce transportation cost of commodities, particularly rice as Nueva Ecija produces the highest volume of rice in the country. The President also announced that the new expressway segment would be toll-free until December 2026.

- [‘Gas-and-run’ suspect surrenders after viral incident](#) (2026-03-31 02:28)

MANILA, Philippines — The driver in the viral gas-and-run incident over the weekend has surrendered, police said Tuesday. Alias "Jefferson," 27, of San Jose Del Monte, Bulacan, appeared at the La Loma Police Station accompanied by family members, Quezon City Police Director Brig. Gen. Randy Glenn Silvio said. The surrender came after a thorough police investigation that included a review of CCTV (closed-circuit television) footage and coordination with concerned agencies that enabled the identification of the vehicle and the person involved in the incident which happened few days ago at a gas station along Balintawak, EDSA. Reports said that Jefferson bought a full tank worth of diesel at P5, 196 but sped off after. Investigation revealed that after learning that the incident had gone viral, the suspect stopped traveling and avoided

social media, unaware that authorities were searching for him. He remained in his residence in Bulacan, where the vehicle involved was also kept. Police said it would pursue the filing of estafa before the City Prosecutor's Office against the suspect who apologized to the gas station management, expressing remorse but blaming high gasoline costs and low earnings for his offense.

- [Pagasa: Another sunny day for PH, heat index in Metro Manila may hit 37°C](#) (2026-03-30 23:41)

MANILA, Philippines — The entire archipelago would continue to experience generally fair weather, and Metro Manila's temperature would hit 37 degrees Celsius, falling under the extreme caution category, the state-run weather agency said on Tuesday. Weather specialist Veronica Torres of the Philippine Atmospheric Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) said it has not monitored any low-pressure area (LPA) forming inside or outside the country's area of responsibility. Instead, Torres said the ridge or extension of the high-pressure area (HPA) has been stretching over northern Luzon. Meanwhile, the national weather bureau said Metro Manila and the rest of the country would also experience partly cloudy to overcast skies with isolated rain showers or thunderstorms due to the localized thunderstorms. The highest heat index of the day would be in San Jose, Occidental Mindoro, at 41°C, falling under the extreme caution category. Heat cramps and heat exhaustion would be possible, and continued exposure to the sun could lead to heat stroke. Pagasa said HPA usually brings sunny, warm weather with minimal chances of rain. The heat index, or the 'feels like' temperature, measures "how hot it actually feels to the human body by combining air temperature and relative humidity."

- [Pag-IBIG to maintain 3% socialized housing rate](#) (2026-03-30 16:07)

IN a bid to keep homeownership affordable, the Pag-IBIG Fund announced on Monday that it would maintain its 3-percent annual interest rate for qualified socialized housing loans under the expanded Pambansang Pabahay para sa Pilipino (4PH) program. Housing Secretary Jose Ramon Aliling, who chairs Pag-IBIG's board of trustees, said in a statement that the move was in support to President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.'s directive to keep decent and affordable housing within reach of Filipino workers, especially those from the low-and-moderate income sectors seeking to own their homes. "In keeping with the directive of President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr., Pag-IBIG Fund shall maintain the 3-percent interest rate for qualified socialized housing loans under the Expanded 4PH so that more Filipino workers can continue to pursue homeownership even during a time of global uncertainty," Aliling said. "By keeping monthly amortizations low, we are helping more working families secure a home of their own while supporting sustained housing production and the jobs it generates, in step with broader national efforts to keep the economy stable," he added. Pag-IBIG CEO Marilene Acosta, meanwhile, said the move also reflects the agency's strong fiscal standing and its continuing commitment to carry out the president's housing agenda in a way that keeps homeownership within reach of working Filipino families. "We continue to heed the direction of President Marcos in helping uplift the

lives of Filipino workers by keeping homeownership affordable for those who need it most,” Acosta said. She added: “Our strong fiscal standing allows Pag-IBIG Fund to keep the subsidized 3-percent rate in place so more working Filipinos can continue pursuing homeownership under the Expanded 4PH.” Under the program, first-time homebuyers, particularly those earning less than P47,856 per month in the National Capital Region (NCR) and less than P34,686 outside NCR, may qualify for the subsidized 3-percent rate for the first five years of the loan term. Pag-IBIG said all overseas Filipino workers, regardless of income, may also qualify. Moreover, it said that under Pag-IBIG Fund’s Early Bird Promo, the first 30,000 qualified borrowers may enjoy the same 3-percent rate for the first 10 years of their housing loan, allowing them to save more and benefit from affordable and predictable monthly amortizations for a longer period. Acosta said the loan may be used to purchase socialized house-and-lot and condominium units priced at up to P950,000 and P1.8 million, respectively. It also provides up to P100,000 in additional financing for home improvements, such as utility connections and home fixtures, and carries a 100-percent loan-to-value ratio, meaning no cash equity is required. At these terms, Acosta explained that monthly amortization is about P4,005 for a house-and-lot unit worth up to P950,000 and about P7,589 for a condominium unit worth up to P1.8 million, amounts that are lower than the cost of monthly rent. In addition, she said that eligible borrowers may further benefit from additional subsidy provided by the national government, which may bring down the annual interest rate to as low as 1 percent and make monthly payments even lower. The agency said that beyond keeping loan rates low, Pag-IBIG is also making it easier and less costly for members to look for a home through regional housing fairs that bring together quality housing units available for sale, partner developers, and Pag-IBIG Fund financing support in one venue. Pag-IBIG has launched its series of regional housing fairs through the Central Luzon Housing Fair earlier this year while similar fairs would take place in South Luzon, the Visayas, Mindanao, and Metro Manila in the coming weeks, Acosta said. The Central Luzon fair gathered over 40 developers, financing institutions, and government agencies in one venue and provided on-site assistance for loan applications, she said. “Through these regional housing fairs, we are making it easier and less costly for members to find a home by bringing quality housing units available for sale, partner developers, and Pag-IBIG Fund financing together in one place,” Acosta said.

- [Cavitex-C5 segment to cut travel time](#) (2026-03-30 16:07)

PRESIDENT Ferdinand Marcos Jr. on Monday led the opening of the Manila-Cavite Toll Expressway-C5 Southlink Segment, a two-kilometer stretch connecting the cities of Parañaque and Taguig that will cut travel time between them from 1.5 hours to just 15 minutes. “And about 36,000 vehicles will pass through here, so, this is a big deal,” Marcos said in Filipino following the inspection. “It’s no small feat to reduce your commute from an hour and a half to 15 minutes. That’s a huge savings,” the president said, adding that the shorter drive would also enable motorists to save on gas. Marcos was accompanied by Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) Secretary Vince Dizon and Department of Transportation (DOTr) Acting Secretary Giovanni Lopez, other government officials, and representatives of Metro Pacific

Tollways Corp. (MPTC). A P3.3-billion deal between Cavitex Infrastructure Corp. and DM Consunji Inc., the six-lane expressway is the last to be completed of the 7.7-kilometer infrastructure divided into four segments — Segments 3A-1 (C5 to Merville), 3A-2 (Merville to E. Rodriguez) and 2 (Cavitex to Sucat Interchange) opened in July 2019, August 2022 and June 2024, respectively. From March 30 to April 30, the toll for Segment 3B will be waived to accommodate those traveling for the Holy Week and to lower travelers' expenses while on the road, the president said. Dizon said motorists and commuters can expect to save more on fuel, following the opening of the Cavitex-C5 Expressway Segment 3B. "What used to be a frustrating, stop-and-go journey from Taguig to Parañaque — often stretching up to two hours in heavy traffic — can now be done in just 15 minutes. That's not just a small improvement — that's a massive upgrade to everyday life for around 36,000 motorists and commuters who take this route daily," added Dizon. The DPWH chief said the opening comes at a crucial time when fuel prices are in their all-time high, biting into people's budgets. "The directive from the president — along with Transportation Secretary Jaime Bautista — was clear: accelerate the opening of as many new roads as possible in the lead-up to Holy Week. With fuel prices remaining high, the government aims to ease the burden on everyday Filipinos by improving road infrastructure," he said. Dizon said the impact of the new expressway segment goes beyond just shorter trips because it will help decongest major roads south of Metro Manila, cut fuel consumption significantly, reduce daily commuter stress and improve mobility for business and logistics. "For thousands of Filipinos, this isn't just another road opening — it's a real, everyday win. Fewer hours wasted. Less money spent. More time for what actually matters," Dizon said. Apart from improving transportation efficiency and reducing costs, Segment 3B is also expected to enhance access for motorists from the South, such as Cavite, to metropolitan areas, thereby boosting economic development in Southern Metro Manila and Cavite by providing better access to industrial, commercial, and residential areas. More mobility efforts are set to be inaugurated, including the opening of the Central Luzon Link Expressway, connecting Tarlac City to Cabanatuan City on Tuesday, March 31.

- [Holy Tuesday emphasizes Christ's call against hypocrisy](#) (2026-03-30 16:06)

HOLY Tuesday highlights the contrast between hypocritical leadership and genuine faith. According to Matthew 23:13-36, the day marks the moment Jesus condemned the hypocrisy of the Pharisees by delivering seven severe warnings against their corrupt leadership. This reminds believers of Jesus' unwavering commitment to His mission — even in the face of betrayal. In his homily, Fr. Rolly Dela Cruz of the Manila Cathedral echoed the Gospel, which says that hypocrisy persists even among members of the Church, challenging them to reflect on their spiritual lives, especially during Holy Week. "Let us not be comfortable with being physically inside, and yet we are distant from the Lord," he said. Dela Cruz said this reality challenges believers to go beyond mere participation in religious activities and instead cultivate sincerity in their faith, especially as Christians commemorate the passion and death of Jesus Christ. "This holy week, most of us are engaging with spiritual exercises. Going to church, attending a procession, and the Stations of the Cross. But sometimes, we are criticized because

of our actions, saying ‘we are churchgoers but have a bad attitude’ ; that is our challenge,” he told the faithful in Filipino. He said that as Filipinos commemorate the Holy Week, the observation serves as a crucial time for self-examination, calling on the faithful to confront inconsistencies between their actions and beliefs.

- [Graft complaint filed vs Bersamin, Olaivar](#) (2026-03-30 16:05)

CONCERNED citizens filed a graft complaint at the Office of the Ombudsman on Monday against former undersecretary Adrian Bersamin of the Presidential Legislative Liaison Office and former Education undersecretary Trygve Olaivar in connection with what the Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (Bayan) said appeared to be a “commitment-insertion-kickback” scheme. The complainants — which included David San Juan, initiator of the Kilusang Bayan Kontra Kurakot, and Bayan Chairman Teodoro Casiño — cited, among others, budget deliberations of the Senate and affidavits of former Public Works undersecretary Roberto Bernardo. The complainants accused Bersamin and Olaivar of “corrupt practices” prohibited by the Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act, grave misconduct and conduct prejudicial to the best interest of the service, and “violation of standards of personal conduct in the discharge and execution of official duties”. The complainants said they watched a video posted late last year by Zaldy Co, a former chairman of the House Committee on Appropriations, who in November 2025 alleged that there had been an order from President Marcos to insert P100 billion in the 2025 General Appropriations Act. The Palace said Co’s accusations were baseless. Bersamin resigned in the same month. Co resigned in September 2025 as a member of the House of Representatives after he was embroiled in a massive flood control bribery scandal. Co denied wrongdoing however, and said he was resigning because of “the real, direct, grave and imminent threat to the lives of my family members and me, and the evident denial of my right to due process of law.” Olaivar, who resigned in November 2025, also denied Bernardo’s allegations. Based on the complaint, Bernardo had alleged in an affidavit that Olaivar in 2024 called him for a meeting to discuss unprogrammed appropriations. Bernardo said that in the meeting, Olaivar asked him to submit a list of projects. According to the affidavit, Bernardo later submitted a list to Olaivar. “Usec. Olaivar told me that the commitment is 15 percent” , he said.

- [PNP boosts police visibility in transport hubs](#) (2026-03-30 16:04)

POLICE presence in key transportation hubs in Metro Manila and tourism hotspots across the country has been intensified as more travelers trooped to bus terminals and sea ports for the Holy Week, the Philippine National Police (PNP) said on Monday. PNP chief Gen. Jose Melencio Nartatez Jr. said in a statement the increased police presence is part of the heightened alert status which took effect on March 29. Around 2.4 million travelers are expected at sea ports across the country, while airport authorities see around 1.3 million passengers at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA) for the entire Holy Week break. Nartatez said that while security is tight, the goal is to keep the flow of people moving. “Travelers can expect tight but efficient security screening. Our kababayan can also expect Police Assistance Desks (PADs) for

quick and reliable response to all the requests for assistance of the travelers,” he said. The PNP is also bracing for the heavy volume of private vehicles on expressways and national highways. Nartatez reminded the public that safety starts with individual responsibility, and urged motorists to double-check their vehicles before heading out for a long drive. The Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippines (CAAP), meanwhile, expects a 7 to 10 percent increase in passenger traffic this Holy Week, projecting 550,000 travelers across its operated airports compared to 505,511 passengers during the same period in 2025. The agency has directed all area and airport managers to implement heightened operational readiness, including increased personnel deployment, stricter security protocols, and continuous passenger monitoring to ensure safe and efficient airport operations nationwide. Help desks will be set up at major airports to assist passengers to ensure a seamless travel experience. “We want to assure the public that all CAAP-operated airports are fully prepared to handle the surge in passenger volume, with measures in place to ensure safe, smooth, and convenient travel for all,” said CAAP Director General Raul del Rosario. He said airports will be on heightened alert from March 28 until April 5. It reminded the traveling public to arrive at the airport at least two to three hours before their scheduled departure, check real-time flight updates with airlines, and see to it that all travel documents are prepared in advance. The aviation regulator operates 42 airports. Four major gateways — NAIA, Mactan-Cebu, Clark, and Subic — are managed by separate authorities, though CAAP still maintains regulatory and air traffic oversight.

- [Over P651 million in fuel subsidy released – LTFRB](#) (2026-03-30 16:03)

THE Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB) has released more than P651 million in fuel subsidies to public transport operators and drivers nationwide, saying the distribution is progressing as planned. In a statement on March 30, LTFRB Chairman Vigor Mendoza II said the agency coordinated with regional offices and other government agencies to speed up the validation and payout process while ensuring a smooth rollout. Mendoza acknowledged minor challenges encountered during the initial distribution in Metro Manila, but said these have since been addressed and used to improve subsequent payouts in the provinces. “We encountered several minor challenges, especially in Metro Manila, but these became lessons that helped improve the distribution in other areas,” he said. “The goal remains: a fast and efficient release of the fuel subsidy.” The subsidy program was implemented following the directive of President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. to mitigate the impact of rising global oil prices amid tensions in the Middle East. The Department of Transportation earlier allocated P2.4 billion for the program, with the LTFRB tasked to facilitate its rollout even before fuel price pressures significantly affect the domestic market. Data from the LTFRB showed that as of March 17, P651,185,000 had been distributed. Metro Manila received the largest share at P181.278 million, followed by Calabarzon with P98.215 million and Central Luzon with P73.416 million. The fuel subsidy covers drivers and operators of traditional and modern jeepneys; UV Express units; buses, including point-to-point services; transport network vehicle service (TNVS) partners; taxis; tricycles; and delivery services. Mendoza said the agency would continue to fast-track the remaining distribution while exploring additional forms of

assistance for the transport sector. “The task is not yet done. There is still much to be done, but we assure the public that the government is working together to deliver this assistance as quickly as possible,” he said. The LTFRB earlier also urged the operators of public utility vehicle terminals to reduce rental fees by at least 50 percent, while toll discounts for public transport units have likewise been implemented.

- [PAL returns to Saipan after nine years](#) (2026-03-30 16:02)

FLAG carrier Philippine Airlines has returned to Saipan after nearly nine years, restoring a direct air link between Manila and the CNMI and signaling renewed confidence in the market. The relaunch comes as the airline pushes ahead despite the declaration of an energy emergency in the Philippines and the recent suspension of its Cebu-Guam route, with officials stressing that the Manila-Saipan service remains a priority. At a ribbon-cutting ceremony held Monday, March 30, at the Francisco C. Ada-Saipan International Airport, PAL executives and CNMI leaders underscored both the symbolic and economic importance of the route’s return. PAL Express Vice President for Ground Operations Matthew Tamaray said the airline is banking on the expansion of the CNMI’s Economic Vitality and Security Travel Authorization Program (EVS-TAP) to drive growth, particularly among Filipino travelers. “We had an engaging discussion with our partners here on Saipan about extending CNMI Economic Vitality and Security Travel Authorization Program for Filipinos,” Tamaray said, noting that travelers from the Philippines are increasingly opting for destinations with visa-free or streamlined entry. “Filipino travelers are expanding their reach... to Asean, Taiwan, Korea, and Japan, where visa processing is streamlined.” He described the restored service as more than a commercial move. “This isn’t just a new entry in our flight schedule; it is a restoration of a vital lifeline between our two nations,” Tamaray said, adding that PAL aims to “make the wide Pacific feel a little smaller and our nations a little closer” while supporting tourism, cargo movement, and access to health care in Manila. CNMI Gov. David Apatang welcomed the airline’s return, calling it crucial to the CNMI’s economic recovery. “Philippine Airlines has been here before, and we want to welcome Philippine Airlines back to the Commonwealth,” Apatang said. “We need your help... to help with our economy here also in the Commonwealth.” CNMI delegate Kimberlyn King-Hinds linked the route to broader efforts to ease federal constraints on air service. “In a nutshell, more planes landing means more customers,” she said. “That is the work that we’re doing in Washington, D.C., to be able to remove some of these structural barriers... that is limiting our ability to expand markets.” She added that the connection goes beyond tourism. “The Philippines is not just customers. It represents connecting families, people who call the CNMI home, who also call the Philippines home.” Commonwealth Ports Authority Executive Director Esther Ada said the restored flights open new opportunities for the islands. “Today marks more than the return of an airline. It represents new opportunities for the CNMI,” Ada said. “The restored service brings greater access to the Philippines and stronger connections to the world, making it easier for families to reunite, cultures to stay connected, and communities to grow stronger.” Philippine Consulate General in Agaña consul Joaquin Ricardo Aragon placed the development in a broader diplomatic context. “Philippine

Airlines had been here before... but now, it's back," Aragon said, noting that 2026 marks the airline's 85th anniversary and the 80th anniversary of Philippines-US diplomatic relations. "We are living in somewhat challenging times now... and this is something to look forward to. It's not all doom and gloom." He said the direct service would especially benefit the Filipino community in the CNMI. "They now have a direct flight to get back home — and to come back also." Passengers on the inaugural flight cited convenience as a key advantage. Raniel Santos, a teacher, said the route eliminates stopovers. "No need to stop over at Guam anymore... it's a lot faster, a lot more convenient... it's a big blessing." Norlyn Cabrera said the direct connection makes travel "easier, and the flight is shorter," while Sildrey Veloria noted he can now visit family "more quickly than stop over to Korea or Guam." For Jerishwin Angeles of the Northern Mariana Islands Football Association, the timing allowed his team to train in the Philippines. "We took this opportunity... to travel to the Philippines," he said, adding that about 40 players will spend 10 days in training camp. PAL's inaugural PR2571 flight from Manila was greeted with a traditional water cannon salute, marking the airline's official return to Saipan after years of absence. Despite external pressures, PAL Regional Head for Japan, Korea and Oceania Bryan Sansolis said the airline is proceeding with the route launch, even as energy constraints in the Philippines have forced adjustments elsewhere in its network. "We're really keen on supporting the Saipan route... it will not affect the new routes," Sansolis said during a Zoom call with media members prior to Monday's flight. The airline will operate twice weekly — Monday and Thursday — using an Airbus A321-CEO configured with 12 business class and 187 economy seats.

- [National security expert urges fact-based discourse amid economic pressures](#) (2026-03-30 16:01)

AMID rising prices and public frustration, a national security expert and civic leader urged a measured, fact-based discourse, cautioning against sweeping claims that could mislead the public. In an interview with The Manila Times, Jose Antonio Goitia acknowledged that Filipinos are feeling the strain of higher fuel costs and inflation but stressed that complex problems require nuanced understanding. "People are under pressure, and it becomes easier to accept extreme conclusions. But governance must still be judged on facts, not feelings," he said. Goitia noted that rising fuel prices follow a global trend driven by supply disruptions and geopolitical tensions beyond any single country's control. "We cannot control global prices. What we can control is how we respond," he said, citing mitigation measures such as fuel subsidies and targeted assistance for transport workers, farmers and fisherfolk. While acknowledging concerns about the adequacy of these measures, Goitia cautioned against claims that no action has been taken. He also stressed that corruption, though critical, should not be used to explain all economic challenges. "Inflation is driven by multiple factors; reducing every issue to one cause stops us from understanding the real problem," he said. Goitia emphasized the need for constructive criticism focused on solutions rather than blame. "It is easy to say everything is wrong. It is harder to say what should be done next," he said. Under the administration of Ferdinand Marcos Jr., he said the government has taken a "measured" approach, balancing

targeted support with fiscal discipline amid global challenges. “A country moves forward not when it shouts the loudest, but when it understands the clearest,” Goitia said.

- [Graft complaint filed vs Bersamin, Olaivar](#) (2026-03-30 16:00)

MANILA, Philippines—Concerned citizens filed a graft complaint at the Office of the Ombudsman on Monday against former undersecretary Adrian Bersamin of the Presidential Legislative Liaison Office and former Education undersecretary Trygve Olaivar in connection with what the Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (Bayan) said appeared to be a "commitment-insertion-kickback" scheme. The complainants—which included David San Juan, initiator of the Kilusang Bayan Kontra Kurakot, and Bayan Chairman Teodoro Casiño—cited, among others, budget deliberations of the Senate and affidavits of former Public Works undersecretary Roberto Bernardo. They accused Bersamin and Olaivar of "corrupt practices" prohibited by the Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act, grave misconduct and conduct prejudicial to the best interest of the service, and "violation of standards of personal conduct in the discharge and execution of official duties." The complainants said they watched a video posted late last year by Zaldy Co, a former chairman of the House Committee on Appropriations, who in November 2025 alleged that there was an order from President Marcos to insert P100 billion in the 2025 General Appropriations Act. The Palace said Co's accusations were baseless. Bersamin resigned in the same month. Co resigned in September 2025 as a member of the House of Representatives after he was embroiled in a massive flood control bribery scandal. Co denied wrongdoing however, and said he was resigning because of "the real, direct, grave and imminent threat to the lives of my family members and me, and the evident denial of my right to due process of law." Olaivar, who resigned in November 2025, also denied Bernardo's allegations. Based on the complaint, Bernardo alleged in an affidavit that Olaivar in 2024 called him for a meeting to discuss unprogrammed appropriations. Bernardo said that in the meeting, Olaivar asked him to submit a list of projects. According to the affidavit, Bernardo later submitted a list to Olaivar. "Usec. Olaivar told me that the commitment is 15 percent," he said.

- [Petron secures 2.5M barrels of Russian crude oil](#) (2026-03-30 16:00)

THE Philippines' sole oil refinery has secured nearly 2.5 million barrels of Russian crude out of "extreme necessity," a stock exchange filing revealed Monday, as the country seeks to replenish fast-dwindling fuel reserves. The Philippines has seen the price of fuel hit historic highs since the US-Israeli war with Iran forced the partial closure of the Strait of Hormuz, with President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. most recently saying stocks could last until June 30. Agence France-Presse (AFP) reported last week that a tanker filled with Russian crude oil had arrived at the harbor servicing refinery operator Petron Corp., a purchase unthinkable before longtime treaty ally the United States eased sanctions tied to Moscow's war in Ukraine. In a report to the Philippine stock exchange released Monday, Petron said it had agreed to purchase Russian crude after seeing at least 4 million barrels in shipments canceled since the start of the Middle East war. "The purchases were undertaken strictly out of extreme necessity as an extraordinary

emergency measure in response to unprecedented geopolitical and supply-chain disruptions and only after exhausting all commercially and operationally viable alternatives,” the report reads. “A refinery shutdown for failure to secure crude would lead to serious nationwide fuel shortages and sharp price spikes,” said the company, whose refinery accounts for about 30 percent of the country’s fuel needs. Since the war began, the cost of diesel and gasoline has skyrocketed, driving protests by groups representing the country’s jeepney drivers and others. Prices were set to tick up again on Tuesday. The United States earlier this month eased some restrictions on sales of Russian crude, allowing countries to purchase oil that was already at sea until April 11. The Philippines’ Department of Energy last week announced the arrival of 142,000 barrels of government-procured diesel, part of its target of “up to 2 million barrels of additional supply for the country.” Energy Secretary Sharon Garin said that shipment had come from Japan. Petron on Monday said that it may continue to purchase Russian oil to augment the national fuel supply if the war in the Middle East persists. “We would like to disclose that if the current crisis persists and alternative crude sources remain unavailable or insufficient, we may again be compelled to consider purchases of Russian crude oil to augment the national fuel and directly mitigate the inimical consequences resulting from the absence of a stable and reliable source of crude,” Petron said. “Any initiative taken by the corporation shall be made in close coordination with the Philippine government and would be guided by the overriding objective of ensuring energy security for the country,” it added. Petron emphasized, however, that the procurement of Russian crude oil is not part of its business-as-usual strategy, and that the purchase was made strictly as an extreme necessity due to the war in the Middle East.

- [CFO eyes training course on marriage migrants](#) (2026-03-30 16:00)

THE Commission on Filipinos Overseas (CFO) has proposed the integration of marriage migrants and cross-border families in an academic training course that deals with the impacts of international migration. The CFO said it made the recommendation to highlight the government’s push for a deeper understanding of global migration. The proposal was made on Wednesday during the curriculum review for the 2026 Professional Course on Global Migration (PCGM), organized by the University of the Philippines-Cifal. The commission said that to craft effective diaspora programs, the CFO requires its key personnel to have a mastery of modern migration governance, which is why its participation in the PCGM “is vital.” The CFO said that its push to include marriage migrants in the curriculum is aligned with its “frontline role in the Philippine government’s campaign against human trafficking.” It noted that under Secretary Dante Ang II, the CFO “is undergoing a strategic pivot toward active diaspora engagement for national development.” The commission “is shifting from viewing migration merely through the lens of labor to viewing overseas Filipinos as vital partners in nation-building, philanthropy, and economic investment,” it added. “Cross-border marriages and mail-order spouse schemes have historically been exploited by traffickers to bypass traditional labor regulations,” the CFO said in a statement on Monday. “Because marriage migrants fall under the CFO’s direct jurisdiction, the commission acts as a critical safety net,” it added. Through mandatory guidance and counseling

services, the CFO screens and prepares spouses of foreign nationals, equipping them with legal knowledge to prevent domestic violence, exploitation and modern-day slavery. Now on its eighth run, the PCGM will take place from August to November 2026 for mid- to senior-level migration practitioners. The course links migration governance to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration.

- [SC drops Harry Roque's petition against House panel](#) (2026-03-30 16:00)

THE Supreme Court has dismissed the petition of former presidential spokesman Harry Roque seeking to prevent the House of Representatives' quad committee (quadcomm) from arresting him or compelling him to attend hearings and submit documents in connection with its investigation into Philippine offshore gaming operators (POGOs). In a decision penned by Associate Justice Samuel Gaerlan, the court en banc ruled that Roque's petition for certiorari and prohibition had become moot after the quadcomm lifted the contempt order against him and the 19th Congress adjourned on June 11, 2025. The quadcomm, convened in 2024, is a composite panel made up of the Committees on Dangerous Drugs; Public Order and Safety; Human Rights; and Public Accounts that investigated alleged illegal activities linked to POGOs. Roque was invited to appear as a resource person at the committee's first hearing. He did not attend, citing a scheduling mix-up. He appeared at the second hearing, where he was questioned about his alleged ties to POGOs and was directed to bring specific documents to the next session. Roque defied the order, and filed instead a motion to quash the quadcomm subpoena. He argued that producing the documents would violate his rights to privacy and protection against self-incrimination. The quadcomm denied his motion and issued an order requiring him to explain why he should not be held in contempt. Roque cited medical reasons for failing to attend subsequent hearings. The committee issued a subpoena compelling his appearance and a detention order, instructing the House sergeant-at-arms to arrest him if necessary. Roque raised the matter to the Supreme Court, and also sought the writ of amparo, claiming that the committee's orders threatened his rights to life, liberty, and security. On Oct. 1, 2024, the court denied his request for amparo, ruling that the remedy is reserved for cases involving extralegal killings, enforced disappearances, or similar threats — none of which applied to a congressional contempt case. The panel lifted the contempt order on June 9, 2025, and submitted its final committee report, which included a proposed bill banning POGOs, the following day. The 19th Congress adjourned on June 11, 2025. In dismissing Roque's petition, the high court emphasized that a case becomes moot when a ruling can no longer provide practical relief. A legislative inquiry ends either upon submission of the committee's final report or adjournment of Congress, at which point any existing contempt order becomes ineffective. With the contempt order lifted, the final report submitted, and Congress adjourned, the Court ruled it could no longer grant Roque any effective relief.

- [Provincial buses allowed on EDSA during Holy Week](#) (2026-03-30 16:00)

THE Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) will temporarily allow provincial buses to use EDSA during Holy Week as part of traffic measures for the expected surge of passengers leaving Metro Manila. The agency said the arrangement will run from 9 p.m. on Wednesday, April 1, until 6 a.m. on Monday, April 6. Buses coming from North Luzon may pass through EDSA up to their terminals in Cubao, Quezon City. Buses from South Luzon will only be allowed up to the Parañaque Integrated Terminal Exchange (PITx) and Pasay City. The MMDA said the temporary setup was intended to help buses complete trips more efficiently during the Holy Week exodus. The agency has already suspended the number coding scheme and assigned personnel in key roads and transport hubs in the metropolis to manage the higher traffic volume.

- [Carpooling rules tweaked to avoid competing with PUVs](#) (2026-03-30 16:00)

THE Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) said on Monday the proposed carpooling program will be restricted so it will not take passengers away from franchised public utility vehicles. Speaking at a press briefing at MMDA's head office in Pasig City, MMDA Chairman Don Artes said the government was shaping the rules to ensure carpooling remains a limited, point-to-point arrangement and does not operate like regular public transport. Artes said the proposed setup would ban roadside pickup and drop-off, and only allow fixed pickup and drop-off points. He said the government also wants to limit carpooling vehicles to two trips a day — one in the morning and one in the afternoon or evening — so they would not function like jeepneys, buses or UV Express units. "Again, it should not function like our regular transport services because we also do not want it to take passengers away from the legitimate operators with franchises that are operating, such as jeepneys, buses, and our UV Express," Artes said. The program would be open to the public, including individual car owners, as well as companies that want to set up shuttle services for their workers. He said even nearby offices in the same building or area may later be allowed to share shuttle arrangements. He said the fare structure would also be regulated so participants would not overcharge commuters. Transport authorities can set parameters to keep contributions close to regular transport costs while still allowing drivers to recover fuel, maintenance and possible parking expenses. Artes urged participants not to abuse the system by treating it as a profit-driven business. He said routes would have to be declared in the application and reflected in the special permit to be issued by the Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB). Artes said the government was considering issuing QR codes that would indicate the restrictions attached to each approved carpool unit. Artes said the LTFRB was expected to issue the guidelines after Holy Week, with the government aiming to launch the program as early as the following week.

- [Bam Aquino wants petroleum products under government price control](#) (2026-03-30 15:19)

MANILA, Philippines -- Sen. Bam Aquino filed Senate Bill (SB) 2011 to classify gasoline, diesel, and other petroleum products as basic necessities, placing them under the government's price control function. In a statement on Monday, the senator said the measure aims to address the "worsening oil crisis burdening many Filipino families." "Across the country, workers, small

business owners, farmers, and ordinary households are struggling to make ends meet,” Aquino said. The bill seeks to “address a gap” in Republic Act 7581 or the Price Act by including petroleum products among the basic necessities that may be subjected to a price ceiling during periods of national emergency. “Currently, only liquefied petroleum gas and kerosene are considered basic necessities, while gasoline, diesel, and other petroleum products are not covered by price control mechanisms,” Aquino said. “The Philippines is in the midst of a fuel price crisis, and Filipino families are feeling the strain. Rising diesel and gasoline prices have pushed up transportation costs, food prices, and the cost of basic goods,” he said. The bill also extends the allowable period for price control on these products from 15 days to thirty 30 days, ensuring that government interventions remain effective amid sustained price increases. “This proposal complements broader efforts to deliver targeted assistance, support workers and small businesses, and ensure the continuity of essential services during this period of uncertainty,” Aquino added.

- [Win Gatchalian wants to limit Filipino youth's social media use](#) (2026-03-30 13:58)

MANILA, Philippines -- Sen. Win Gatchalian sought to limit Filipino youth's access to digital platforms, for their protection, following Indonesia's enforcement of a social media ban for minors under 16. “Let us not wait for the problem to worsen before we act,” Gatchalian said in a statement in Filipino. He cited the results of the 2022 Programme for International Student Assessment which found that every one-hour increase in 15-year old Filipino learners' use of digital devices for leisure resulted in a four-point decrease in math scores. In 2024, Australia became the first country in the world to ban minors under 16 on social media. The ban took full effect in December 2025. The senator on Monday said that Indonesia is the first country in Southeast Asia to enforce a social media ban for minors. Under its regulation, minors below 16 will be prohibited from creating accounts on platforms deemed ‘high-risk’, including Instagram, Tiktok, Facebook, YouTube, X, and Roblox, among others. The Cybercrime Investigation and Coordinating Center earlier urged telecommunication firms to prepare for a possible nationwide Roblox block to protect children from online exploitation and harmful content. Gatchalian also cited a Los Angeles jury finding YouTube and Meta liable for childhood social media addiction. Sen. Risa Hontiveros earlier filed Reso 357 directing the Senate Committee on Women, Children, Family Relations and Gender Equality to conduct an investigation on Roblox and other online gaming platforms. Hontiveros wants to establish a mandatory age verification protocols and child safety standards to prevent online sexual abuse and exploitation of children, grooming, violent radicalization and other emerging digital threats consistent with international best practices and child safety laws.

- [PCUP, PhilFIDA partner to engage Metro Manila urban poor in ‘abaca’ production](#) (2026-03-30 13:45)

MANILA, Philippines – The Presidential Commission for the Urban Poor (PCUP) has partnered with the Philippine Fiber Industry Development Authority (PhilFIDA) to expand livelihood opportunities for urban poor communities. PCUP Commissioner Reynaldo Galupo described his

recent meeting with PhilFIDA Executive Director Arnold Atienza at the agency's central office in Quezon City as productive, noting that both sides explored joint programs aimed at benefiting urban poor groups, particularly those in remote areas of Metro Manila. In a message to The Manila Times on Monday via Viber, Galupo said discussions focused on how the two agencies could collaborate on livelihood initiatives linked to fiber production. The PCUP official emphasized the importance of creating more income opportunities for the urban poor, especially through inter-agency partnerships. "Partnerships like this with PhilFIDA can help reach more families and equip them with practical, hands-on skills," he said. Atienza welcomed the proposal and highlighted several of PhilFIDA's ongoing programs, including training on fibers such as abaca, cotton, silk, pineapple, and coconut. He also cited current initiatives such as abaca discussions (talakayan) and bag-making projects being conducted in provinces like Catanduanes. PhilFIDA likewise expressed openness to involving PCUP in its training programs, which could allow selected beneficiaries from urban poor communities to participate. Both agencies agreed to move forward with drafting and signing a memorandum of agreement to formalize the partnership. According to Galupo, the collaboration is also expected to involve coordination with local government units to support the program's rollout on the ground.

- [83,000 passengers avail of Manila's free jeepney rides on first day](#) (2026-03-30 13:06)

MANILA, Philippines — Around 83,000 passengers benefited from the free jeepney rides launched by the Manila City government on its first day of operations. In a statement released Monday, the city government reported that a total of 82,958 passengers were served by 1,027 participating jeepneys under the initiative. Manila Mayor Isko Moreno earlier said the program aims to ease the impact of rising fuel costs on commuters. Under the scheme, the city government will rent more than 1,000 active jeepneys, with drivers earning about P3,000 per day. The initiative will run for five days, starting Monday, March 30 and 31, before pausing for Holy Week. It will resume from Monday to Wednesday the following week, with a possible extension depending on available funds. Holy Week. It will then resume on Monday to Wednesday of the following week, with a possible extension depending on available funds.

- [Roads in Manila to be closed for Good Friday procession](#) (2026-03-30 12:35)

MANILA, Philippines—The Manila Police District (MPD) on Monday said roads will be closed on Good Friday for the procession of the Nazarene. In a Facebook post, the MPD said a rerouting scheme will be implemented as roads will be closed starting at 7 p.m. on April 2. The 3.8-kilometer route of the procession will begin and end at Plaza Miranda and will pass through several key streets, including Villalobos, Carlos Palanca, Quezon Boulevard, Arlegui, Legarda, Hidalgo, and Bilibid Viejo, before returning to Quiapo Church. Among the major roads affected are northbound and southbound lanes of Quezon Boulevard from A. Mendoza/Fugoso to Quezon Bridge, parts of España Boulevard, C.M. Recto Avenue service roads, Legarda Street, and several streets in Quiapo and San Miguel districts. Other roads to be closed include Arlegui, San Rafael, Gonzalo Puyat, Paterno, Evangelista, and Carriedo. The MPD urged motorists to take alternate routes during the procession. Vehicles from A. Mendoza heading to Quezon Boulevard

should turn right to Fugoso Street and then left to Tomas Mapua Street. Those coming from Quezon City using España Boulevard may turn right to P. Campa or use Nicanor Reyes (Morayta) to access C.M. Recto Avenue. Meanwhile, vehicles from P. Burgos Avenue heading to Quezon Bridge should take Jones or McArthur bridges. Those from Ayala Bridge bound for Carlos Palanca Street may proceed to P. Casal or take San Marcelino Street to UN Avenue. Motorists from Sta. Mesa heading to Legarda should divert to C.M. Recto Avenue.

- [Lawyers to file impeachment complaint vs Comelec chief, 6 commissioners](#) (2026-03-30 10:27)

MANILA, Philippines — A group of lawyers on Monday said they will file an impeachment complaint before the House of Representatives against Commission on Elections (Comelec) Chairman George Erwin Garcia and six commissioners, citing alleged violations of election laws and betrayal of public trust. Eldrige Marvin Aceron, founding partner of Aceron & Attorneys and head of the Aceron Public Interest and Legal Association, and Sikini Labastilla of Project Damaskus Lawyers said the complaint accused Comelec officials of culpable violation of Republic Act 8436 or the Automated Election System Law, as well as other high crimes. The complaint stemmed from what the lawyers described as a “pattern of institutional misconduct” during the 2022 and 2025 elections. Aceron said one of the key allegations involved the Comelec’s use of software version 3.5.0 in around 110,000 automated counting machines during the May 12, 2025 elections, which he claimed was not the same version subjected to the legally required source code review. Garcia had earlier acknowledged the use of the software version. The complaint also questioned the alleged use of an “unauthorized intermediary server,” referred to as “Data Center 3,” through which election results were reportedly transmitted before reaching accredited transparency servers. The complainants said this setup led to delays in the release of results to watchdog groups, including the Parish Pastoral Council for Responsible Voting and the National Citizens’ Movement for Free Elections. Garcia was also accused of concealing the use of a single private IP address for thousands of vote-counting machine modems. The complainants said transmission logs that could have verified early vote data were no longer available after they were not preserved. They also pointed to a Supreme Court ruling in August 2024 that found the Comelec en banc liable for “official inaction” in relation to its own procedures. The fourth charge accused the poll body of selectively enforcing campaign finance laws, allegedly favoring candidates allied with the administration despite findings of non-compliance by its own Political Finance and Affairs Department. Aceron said the timing of the filing was influenced by the approaching end of the terms of two commissioners in 2027 and the need to establish accountability ahead of the 2028 national elections. “Garcia will supervise the 2028 elections with the same undisclosed transmission architecture, the same pattern of evidence concealment, and the same selective enforcement record that are the subject of this complaint. That cannot happen without a formal legal record demanding accountability,” he said. Garcia however dismissed the complaint, saying it is about old issues that the poll body had repeatedly answered. “The credibility of the 2022 and 2025 elections was confirmed by random manual audit, revision of ballots, by

citizens' arms and international observers," Garcia said. The complainants said the case would be transmitted to members of the House of Representatives and made available to the public and media. They added that they are seeking endorsement from at least one lawmaker, as required under the Constitution for impeachment complaints to proceed.

- [DOTr warns bus firms: Unauthorized fare hikes could lead to franchise suspension](#) (2026-03-30 05:52)

MANILA, Philippines—The Department of Transportation on Monday warned bus companies that raised fares that they could face show cause orders and possible license suspension. Transportation Secretary Giovanni Lopez said authorities were verifying reports that some operators at the Parañaque Integrated Terminal Exchange (PITX) implemented fare increases without government approval. "We will be able to take action by issuing citations to bus operators and public transport vehicles that have increased fares without authorization," Lopez said in an interview. He stressed that any fare adjustment without clearance from the Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board could lead to the revocation or suspension of a company's franchise. The warning followed an earlier directive by President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. suspending a planned fare hike for public utility vehicles that was supposed to take effect on March 19.

- [P651M in fuel aid released to transport sector — LTFRB](#) (2026-03-30 05:16)

MANILA, Philippines—The Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB) said that it has released more than P651 million in fuel subsidies to public transport operators and drivers nationwide. In a statement issued Monday, March 30, LTFRB Chairman Vigor Mendoza II said the agency coordinated with regional offices and other government agencies to speed up the validation and payout process. Mendoza said minor problems were encountered during the initial distribution in Metro Manila, but these have since been addressed to improve subsequent payouts in the provinces. "We encountered several minor challenges, especially in Metro Manila, but these became lessons that helped improve the distribution in other areas," he said. "The goal remains: a fast and efficient release of the fuel subsidy." The subsidy program was implemented following the directive of President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. to mitigate the impact of rising global oil prices amid tensions in the Middle East. The Department of Transportation allocated P2.4 billion for the program, with the LTFRB tasked to facilitate its rollout. Data from the LTFRB showed that as of March 17, P651,185,000 had been distributed. Metro Manila received the largest share at P181.278 million, followed by Calabarzon with P98.215 million and Central Luzon, P73.416 million. The fuel subsidy covers drivers and operators of traditional and modern jeepneys, UV Express units, buses including point-to-point services, transport network vehicle service (TNVS) partners, taxis, tricycles, and delivery services. Mendoza said the agency would continue to fast-track the remaining distribution while exploring additional forms of assistance for the transport sector. "The task is not yet done. There is still much to be done, but we assure the public that the government is working together to deliver this assistance as quickly as possible," he said.

- [Trump says Russia can deliver oil to Cuba](#) (2026-03-30 04:06)

HAVANA, Cuba — US President Donald Trump said Sunday that Moscow could send oil to Cuba despite Washington's de facto fuel blockade, as a Russian tanker was expected to deliver some much-needed crude to the crisis-hit island. While the shipment would give the country some relief, Trump renewed his threats against the communist government, predicting that it would fail "within a short period of time." The Anatoly Kolodkin, which is carrying 730,000 barrels of crude, was off northeast Cuba on Sunday evening and is expected to dock in the western port of Matanzas by Tuesday, according to shipping tracker MarineTraffic. It would be the first shipment of oil to the island since January, bringing some temporary relief to the country of 9.6 million people that has endured a deepening energy and economic crisis. "If a country wants to send some oil into Cuba right now, I have no problem with that, whether it's Russia or not," Trump told reporters as he flew back to Washington from his Mar-a-Lago estate in Florida. "Cuba's finished, they have a bad regime, they have very bad and corrupt leadership, and whether or not they get a boat of oil it's not going to matter," Trump said. "I'd prefer letting it in, whether it's Russia or anybody else, because the people need heat and cooling and all of the other things that you need," he added. Cuba lost its main regional ally and oil supplier in January when US forces captured Venezuela's socialist leader Nicolas Maduro. Trump subsequently threatened to impose tariffs on any country sending oil to Cuba and has mused about "taking" the island. "Within a short period of time, it's going to fail, and we will be there to help it out," he said Sunday. "We'll be there to help our great Cuban Americans out who were thrown out of Cuba, in many cases, their family members were mutilated and killed by (Fidel) Castro... Cuba's going to be next." Daily outages After Washington launched the oil blockade, President Miguel Diaz-Canel imposed emergency measures to conserve fuel, including strict rationing of gasoline. He warned this month that "any external aggressor will encounter an unbreakable resistance." Fuel prices have soared, public transport has dwindled and some airlines have suspended flights to Cuba, hitting the country's fragile economy. Cubans have endured regular outages as its aging power plants struggle to meet demand, with seven nationwide blackouts since 2024, including two this month, sparking rare protests. A humanitarian aid convoy brought more than 50 tonnes of medicine, food, solar panels and other goods to Cuba by air and sea in recent days. The Anatoly Kolodkin, which is under US sanctions, left the Russian port of Primorsk on March 8. It was escorted by a Russian navy ship across the English Channel, but the two vessels parted ways when the tanker entered the Atlantic Ocean, according to the British Royal Navy. The New York Times, citing an unnamed US official briefed on the matter, said the US Coast Guard was allowing the tanker to reach Cuba. The US Coast Guard did not reply to an AFP request for comment. Another ship that was reportedly carrying Russian diesel to Cuba, the Hong Kong-flagged Sea Horse, rerouted to Venezuela this week. Diesel an 'urgent need' Once the Anatoly Kolodkin's crude arrives in Cuba, it would take about 15-20 days to process the oil and another 5-10 days to deliver its refined products, according to Jorge Pinon, an expert on Cuba's energy sector at the University of Texas at Austin. "The urgent need today in Cuba is diesel," the former oil executive said. The Russian shipment could be converted into 250,000 barrels of diesel, enough to cover the country's demand for around 12.5 days, Pinon

said. Pinon said the government would have to decide whether to use the fuel for backup power generators or for buses, tractors and trains needed to keep the economy going for two weeks. "If you are Diaz-Canel or somebody making the decision, you go, 'OK, where where do I go with that diesel?'" he said. "Do I want to generate more electricity so there are less apagones (blackouts)? Or do I want to put it in the transportation sector?"

- [Marcos leads opening of Cavite-C5 segment](#) (2026-03-30 02:19)

MANILA, Philippines—President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. on Monday led the opening of the Manila-Cavite Toll Expressway-C5 Southlink Segment, a two-kilometer stretch connecting the cities of Parañaque and Taguig. The President said the thoroughfare is expected to cut travel time from one and a half hours to just 15 minutes. "About 36,000 vehicles will pass through here. So, this is a big deal because it will decongest, reduce traffic on small roads," Marcos said in Filipino following the inspection. "And that's a huge thing because of the big savings in commuter time. Second, because of the turmoil in the Middle East, it's a huge savings in gasoline, in crude oil, in fuel," he added. Marcos announced that this segment of the expressway would be toll-free for the whole month of April.

- [City govt does not prepare fuel aid list, Sotto clarifies](#) (2026-03-30 02:11)

MANILA, Philippines — Pasig City Mayor Vico Sotto said Monday the city government only assists national agencies in the distribution of fuel-related aid and does not decide who gets included in the list of beneficiaries. During the city's flag-raising ceremony, Sotto thanked members of the Tricycle Operators and Drivers Association and other riders for their cooperation and patience as the city works with agencies handling the aid process. He said the list for tricycle groups was being prepared with the help of the Tricycle Operation and Regulatory Office, adding that the order of submission and processing would also affect who gets accommodated first. For other subsectors such as delivery riders, TNVS drivers and jeepney operators and drivers associations, Sotto said the city government does not maintain a working list, making the process more difficult. He said the local government has been trying to coordinate with the proper agencies, including the Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board, the Department of Transportation and the Department of Social Welfare and Development. Sotto added that aid under the Assistance to Individuals in Crisis Situations was being extended to people affected by rising oil prices, noting that riders and drivers were among the first sectors hit and were therefore first to receive subsidy from the national government.

- [Midnight train from Georgia: A view of America from the tracks as airports struggle in the shutdown](#) (2026-03-30 00:51)

ABOARD THE CRESCENT — There's something melodic about watching the sun rise over a rural stillness broken only by the rhythms of steel wheels on tracks. Or so we tell ourselves. In this case, being aboard a train at all owed more to politics than poetry. Congress and Donald Trump were mired in their latest budget stalemate, one rooted in the Republican president's

immigration crackdown and the tactics of federal forces he has sent to U.S. cities. But this impasse has upended a foundational constant of American life today: easy air travel. In Atlanta, my hometown airport, cheerfully marketed as the world's busiest, had descended into organized chaos. Unpaid federal employees called out from work, leaving a diminished security staff to screen travelers frustrated by hours-long waits in line. I wanted to get to Washington for the NCAA basketball tournament. So I eliminated the risk of a missed flight and booked the train overnight and into game day across a 650-mile route. In this fraught moment in U.S. politics, I slowed down and thought about things we take for granted. Who ever ponders the conveniences of that 20th-century innovation, the airplane, that makes 21st-century hustle possible? We book and board. An unconscious, first-world flex of modernity. It's even rarer to grapple with the inconvenience. My decision had taken me further back, to the 19th century and another defining innovation: the long-distance train. A 14½-hour weekend train ride is time aplenty to appreciate how completely politics, economics, social strife and fights over identity and belonging have always affected the order of our lives, including how, when and where we move around in these United States. But Amtrak's Crescent also allowed me to see the expanse of our collective experience. I traversed the urban, suburban and rural breadth of East Coast America. I learned how other travelers came aboard. And in that, I found the portrait of people, past and present, who refuse to be as paralyzed as some of their elected leaders. Convenience on the railways There is little glamour late night in a crowded Amtrak station. Children are up past bedtime and tended by frazzled parents. Older adults struggle with luggage and stairs. Airports are not red-carpet affairs either, of course. But there is a certain cache to Delta's Atlanta-Washington flights. They typically take about two hours gate to gate. They often are slotted at a midpoint gate of the concourse nearest the main terminal. That is almost certainly a nod to members of Congress who use it — but who have lost some airline perks during this extended partial shutdown. In normal circumstances I can get from my front porch to Capitol Hill or downtown in as little as 4½ hours. Security lines these days could at least double my overall air travel time. The train is still longer, and time is money, we are taught. But certainty has value, too, even if it means an 11:29 p.m. departure. And at the Amtrak station, there were no standstill lines, no Transportation Security Administration agents, no ICE agents as stand-ins. Passengers who arrived mere minutes before departure made it on board and found seats quickly — assigned in boarding order, not predetermined zones that yield jammed aisles. There's no in-seat service or satellite TV. But even coach seats, the lowest Amtrak tier, are as spacious as airline first-class — and there is Wi-Fi, so it's not the 19th century or even 20th century after all. On board, I heard one crew member joke, "I'm no TSA agent." The pathways of history As a boy in rural Alabama, I counted train cars and wondered where they were headed. I've since read diary entries and letters from my grandmother and her sisters recounting World War II-era weekend trips to Atlanta. The South's largest city has a historical hook, too. Originally named "Terminus," Atlanta developed in the antebellum era as a critical intersection of north-south and east-west rail routes. That is what drew Gen. William Tecumseh Sherman for one of the Civil War's seminal campaigns that helped defeat the Confederacy. A century after the Civil War, Delta chose Atlanta for its headquarters rather than Birmingham, Alabama, which was the larger city as of the 1960 census. The company's decision was tied up in tax breaks for the

airline, named for its crop duster origins in the Mississippi Delta region. According to some interpretations, Delta's decision was made easier because of the more overt racism of Alabama's and Birmingham's leaders as they defended Jim Crow — a code that, among other acts, allowed states to segregate the passenger trains that predated Amtrak. On this night, I heard many languages and accents, notable given the role that immigrant labor played in building the U.S. rail system and especially striking now with immigration — legal and illegal — at the forefront in Washington, my destination. I saw faces that reflected U.S. pluralism, a different mix from what my grandmother and aunts would have seen a lifetime ago. The array of voices celebrated the freedom and ease of rail travel. So did Agatha Grimes and her friends after they boarded in Greensboro, North Carolina, as part of a long weekend trip to celebrate her 62nd birthday. "I got stuck in the Atlanta airport last week," Grimes said, as her group laughed together in the dining car. "It's just nuts." Beretta Nunnally, a self-described "train veteran" who organized their trip, said, "There's no worry about parking. No checking bags. You come to the station, you get where you going, and you come home." An era for planes, trains and automobiles. Still, that is not as easy in the United States as it once was. Just as politics, economics and subsidies helped grow U.S. railroads, those factors diminished the network as auto manufacturers, oil companies, roadbuilders and, finally, airline manufacturers and airlines commanded favor from politicians and attention from consumers. Riding hours across rural areas, I noticed the junkyards where kudzu and chain-link fencing framed rows of rusted automobiles. I saw the farmland and equipment that helps feed cities and the rest of the nation. I awoke to see the night lights of office towers in Charlotte, North Carolina, and its NFL stadium. I saw vibrant county seats — and I thought of countless other towns like them that are not thriving as they sit disconnected from passenger rail and far from the Eisenhower-era interstate system that we crossed multiple times on our way. In each setting, voters — conservatives, liberals, the extremes and between — have chosen their representatives, senators and a president who now set the nation's course. When I arrived in Washington, I paused to enjoy Union Station's grand hall and its Beaux Arts appeal, and I lamented how much splendor has been lost because so many striking U.S. terminals have been razed. I stepped outside and looked up at the Capitol dome. While I had slept, the Senate managed a bipartisan deal to fund all of the Department of Homeland Security except immigration enforcement. As I continued northward, House Republican leaders rejected it. The stalemate continued. I was a weary traveler but renewed citizen. I had a game to get to. And the train rolled on.

- [Egypt's early closing order jolts Cairo's night life as war-driven oil costs soar](#)

(2026-03-30 00:48)

CAIRO — The Egyptian government is seeking ways to conserve oil-powered electricity during the U.S.-Israel war with Iran, enacting at least one policy that threatens Cairo's identity as a city that never sleeps. The government imposed new nationwide closing times Saturday for stores, restaurants and cafes, ordering them to shut early and interfering with their ability to operate during critical hours. "It's ruinous," said Youssef Salah, a cafe owner in Cairo. "It deprives us from our peak time." The decision is one of a series of measures the government has taken in

recent weeks to mitigate the fallout of the U.S. and Israeli war against Iran, which has shaken the Middle East and the global economy. Though Egypt is not a party to the widening conflict, the most populous Arab country is one of the most impacted by the war's far-reaching repercussions, including higher oil prices and disrupted shipping routes. 'We must protect people's livelihoods'

The early closures will have dire repercussions on hundreds of thousands of small businesses found on almost every street, alley and lane across the country. Some of them — including many eateries, juice shops and cafés — usually operate nonstop. Salah, the café owner in Cairo's middle-class neighborhood of Sayeda Zeinab, said he was forced to cut his 35-member workforce by 40%. The 46-year-old father of three used to keep his venue open 24 hours a day, with peak hours starting in the evening till the first hours of the new day. The late-night shifts are now abolished, he said. "It's painful," Salah said as he closed his shop doors at 9 p.m. (19:00 GMT) on Saturday. Yet two days into the decision, some Egyptians danced around the government order. Some cafes closed their front doors as patrons inside went about smoking shisha or playing chess, dominos or cards. Others took to social media to criticize the early closures. "The Butterfly effect," Mahmoud Elmamlouk, editor of Cairo24, one of the biggest news outlets in Egypt, wrote on social media after cafe shops shuttered their doors Saturday evening. "The closure of Strait of Hormuz has deprived us from smoking shisha in Talbia," he wrote, referencing a working-class neighborhood in greater Cairo. Ayman Harbi, who works at a store in Downtown Cairo, called on the government to extend the opening hours at least till midnight, saying that closing at 9 p.m. is "extremely difficult" for business like his. "Our work in the summer usually starts after 8 p.m. (18:00 GMT)," he said. "Forcing me to close at 9 p.m. (19:00 GMT) makes the workday pointless." Magdy al-Deeb, a business owner, urged the government to reverse the decision to preserve jobs, especially for cafes and small businesses. "Where will all those people (workers) go," he asked of those who could lose their jobs. Smoking a shisha — the tobacco burning water pipe — in a Cairo café, he said society " must protect people's livelihoods." The decision to close businesses early has also changed to the lifestyle for Egyptians accustomed to being able to buy virtually anything at any time, especially in big cities like Cairo and Alexandria. A nighttime tour across Cairo Saturday and Sunday revealed the city's usually vibrant streets turned eerily quiet. 'Exceptional' measures

Shops, restaurants, malls and cafes across the country have been ordered to close at 9 p.m. (19:00 GMT) for a month. The measures -- described by the government as "exceptional" — include dimming streetlights and roadside advertising. The government's district offices in the New Administrative Capital, east of Cairo, were also ordered to close by 6 p.m. (16:00 GMT). Civil servants were also asked to return working from home for one day a week in April. The government exempted tourist-attraction areas from its energy-saving measures, given that tourism is a major source of foreign currency for the cash-strapped country. The exempt areas include the Red Sea tourist resorts of Hurghada, Sharm el-Sheikh, Marsa Alam, as well as the antiquities-rich southern cities of Aswan and Luxor. Prime Minister Mustafa Madbouly said the measures aim to curtail oil consumption. "The alternative would be to resort again to further price increases," he warned. The government already hiked prices for fuel and cooking gas earlier this month as global energy prices soared with the virtual closure of the Strait of Hormuz, a crucial chokepoint for about a fifth of global oil supply. Repercussions are

particularly painful for Egypt. Global energy prices have skyrocketed since the start of the war on Feb. 28, when the U.S. and Israel launched massive airstrikes on Iran, which retaliated with attacks on oil and gas infrastructure across the Persian Gulf and by squeezing traffic through the Strait of Hormuz. The increases hit Egypt hard given that its population of over 108 million people consumes \$20 billion of oil products annually, including fuel used to operate power plants. The country imports 28% of its gasoline and 45% of its diesel and Madbouly said the nation's oil bill had more than doubled from January to \$2.5 billion.

- [Israeli police prevent Catholic leaders from celebrating Palm Sunday Mass at Jerusalem church \(2026-03-30 00:44\)](#)

TEL AVIV, Israel — Israeli police prevented Catholic leaders from entering the Church of the Holy Sepulchre to celebrate a private Mass on the Christian holiday of Palm Sunday for the first time in centuries, setting off a wave of criticism from the United States and others. Jerusalem's major holy sites, including the church, are closed because of the ongoing Iran war, as the city has come under frequent fire from Iranian missiles. Early Monday morning, Israel's police said it had approved a "limited prayer framework" for the church, in consultation with the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem. On Sunday, the Patriarchate had called the police decision to bar entry "a manifestly unreasonable and grossly disproportionate measure." It prevented two of the church's top religious leaders, including the Latin Patriarch, Cardinal Pierbattista Pizzaballa, and the Custos of the Holy Land, from celebrating Palm Sunday at the place where Christians believe Jesus was crucified. Palm Sunday commemorates Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem and launches the Holy Week commemorations for Christians which culminates in Easter. Israeli police said they had notified church authorities on Saturday that no Mass could take place on Palm Sunday because of safety considerations, the lack of access for emergency vehicles in narrow alleys of the Old City and lack of adequate shelter. In the Monday statement, police said the new framework would aim to "enable freedom of worship." It highlighted that restrictions at holy sites without standard protected spaces — like the cavernous church deep in a maze of tiny alleyways — are meant to "safeguard worshippers" from Iranian attacks. Earlier this month, shrapnel from the interception of an Iranian missile fell on a rooftop just steps from the church. However, the Latin Patriarchate said the Church of the Holy Sepulchre had been hosting Masses that aren't open to the public since the Iran war began on Feb. 28, and it was unclear why Sunday's Mass and access by the two priests was any different. "It's a very, very sacred day for Christians and in our opinion there was no justification for such a decision or such an action," said Farid Jubran, the spokesperson for the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem. Jubran said that the church had requested permission from police for a few religious leaders to enter the church for a private celebration on Sunday — not one that was open to the public. The Patriarchate said that the decision impeded freedom of worship and the status quo in Jerusalem. The traditional Palm Sunday procession normally sees tens of thousands of Christians from around the world walk from the Mount of Olives down the narrow, hilly streets toward the Old City, waving palm fronds and singing. The Patriarchate canceled the traditional processional last week because of safety concerns, and has held Masses limited to fewer than

50 worshippers in compliance with the Israeli military's guidelines for civilians. Pizzaballa instead celebrated Mass in the nearby St. Savior's Monastery, a soaring marble church which is located next to an underground music school that the Israeli military has deemed a safe shelter space. Later on Sunday, Pizzaballa held a prayer for peace at the Dominus Flevit Shrine on the Mount of Olives, but kept his homily concentrated on Jesus and didn't mention the morning's incident. Pope Leo XIV, at the end of Palm Sunday Mass in St. Peter's Square, prayed for all Christians in the Middle East who he said were living through an "atrocious" conflict. He said that "in many cases, they cannot live fully the rites of these holy days," though he didn't elaborate. The Vatican spokesman didn't immediately respond when asked to comment on the Jerusalem incident. US, France and Italy criticize decision The closure sparked a wave of criticism that Israeli authorities had gone too far in restricting worship, including from Israel's top ally, the United States. U.S. Ambassador Mike Huckabee, a devout evangelical Christian, said that the incident was "an unfortunate overreach." He said in a statement that the proposed prayer with Pizzaballa and the others was well below the 50-person limit for gatherings. "For the Patriarch to be barred from entry to the Church on Palm Sunday for a private ceremony is difficult to understand or justify," he wrote. French President Emmanuel Macron condemned the incident, which he said had added to the "concerning increase in violations of the status of the Holy Sites in Jerusalem." In a post on X, Macron wrote: "The free exercise of worship in Jerusalem must be guaranteed for all religions." Italian authorities across the political spectrum condemned the move to restrict Pizzaballa, an Italian cardinal considered a leading papal contender in the 2025 conclave, to access the church. The Italian government formally protested the incident to Israeli authorities and summoned Israel's ambassador to Rome for clarification. Premier Giorgia Meloni said that the police action "constitutes an offense not only against believers but against every community that recognizes religious freedom." Meloni's conservative government tried to keep a balanced position with Israel during the war in Gaza, supporting Israel's right to defense but condemning the toll on Palestinians. The Italian leader has also said that Italy won't participate in the Iran war, while affirming that the Islamic Republic can't be allowed to possess nuclear weapons. Israel working to allow partial access Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said there was no "malicious intent" and that the cardinal was prevented from accessing the church because of safety concerns, but that Israel would try to partially open the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in the coming days. "Given the holiness of the week leading up to Easter for the world's Christians, Israel's security arms are putting together a plan to enable church leaders to worship at the holy site in the coming days," Netanyahu wrote on X. In an interview with Italian Catholic broadcaster TG2000, Pizzaballa said there was difference of opinions with Israeli authorities over accessing the church, but that the dispute remained polite. "We want to use this situation to try to clarify better what will be done in the coming days, respecting the security of all naturally but also in respect of the right to prayer," he said. The Western Wall, the holiest site where Jews can pray, is also mostly closed because of safety issues, but authorities are letting up to 50 people at a time pray in an enclosed area adjacent to the plaza. Smaller churches, synagogues, and mosques are open in Jerusalem's Old City if they are located within a certain distance of a bomb shelter deemed acceptable by Israel's military and, if gatherings are kept under 50 people. The same limitations apply to most of Israel, where

schools have also been closed since the beginning of the Iran war and workplaces can function only where a shelter can be reached in the short time available after an alert.

- [Strikes knock out power in Tehran, Iran says US plotting ground invasion](#) (2026-03-30 00:40)

TEHRAN, Iran — Airstrikes knocked out electricity to parts of Tehran and its surroundings on Sunday as a top Iranian official accused the United States of plotting a ground invasion despite publicly pushing for a negotiated deal. Pakistan said meanwhile that it was ready to broker and host "meaningful talks" between Washington and Tehran to bring an end to the month-old US-Israeli war against Iran. The Israeli parliament was set to vote overnight on a 2026 budget that provides for a massive rise in military spending, increasing the defense budget by more than \$10 billion to over \$45 billion. In addition to fighting the war against Iran with its US ally since February 28, Israel is also battling in southern Lebanon against Iran-backed Hezbollah. Iran's energy ministry reported power outages in the capital, its surrounding region and Alborz province "following attacks on electricity industry facilities" and said the authorities were working to "resolve the problem." US President Donald Trump has previously threatened to strike Iranian power stations if Tehran does not negotiate a peace deal, before repeatedly extending a deadline to do so. Iranian parliamentary speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf warned on Sunday after a US warship with another 3,500 military personnel arrived in the Middle East that any US ground invasion of the country would be repelled. "The enemy publicly sends messages of negotiation and dialogue while secretly planning a ground attack," Ghalibaf said in a statement carried by the official IRNA news agency. "Our men are waiting for the arrival of the American soldiers on the ground to set them on fire and punish their regional allies once and for all," he added. The war has escalated into a regional conflagration as Iran has retaliated with attacks on Gulf states and shut down the critical Strait of Hormuz oil shipping lane, sending energy markets into a tailspin and threatening the world economy. Ghalibaf called for unity among Iranians, saying the war was "at its most critical stage." 'Uncertain future' Weeks of unrelenting strikes have taken a heavy toll on ordinary people in the country. "I miss a peaceful night's sleep," an artist in Tehran told AFP, saying night-time strikes were "so intense it felt like all of Tehran was shaking." Farzaneh, a 62-year-old woman in Iran's western city of Ahvaz contacted by AFP from Paris, said: "People wake up each day worried about an uncertain future." A university in Iran's central city of Isfahan said it was hit by airstrikes on Sunday for the second time since the war erupted. In Tehran, the Qatari news channel Al Arabiya said an Israeli missile hit the building housing its office. On the diplomatic front, Pakistan, acting as a go-between for Washington and Tehran, hosted foreign ministers from Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Egypt in Islamabad for talks on the crisis. Trump has repeatedly spoken of diplomatic contacts with Iran, although these claims have been denied by Tehran. Pakistani Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar said the visiting diplomats had discussed how to "bring an early and permanent end to the war" and there was a growing consensus behind Islamabad hosting peace talks. He said Iran and the United States had expressed "confidence in Pakistan to facilitate the talks" and that he had spoken to his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi as well as UN

Secretary-General Antonio Guterres and other foreign ministers who also backed the idea. Despite making diplomatic overtures including proposing a 15-point plan to end the war, the United States has also been sending more military assets into the region. The USS Tripoli, an amphibious assault ship carrying around 3,500 Marines and sailors, arrived in the Middle East on Friday. According to The Washington Post, the Pentagon was preparing plans for weeks of ground operations -- potentially including raids on sites near the Strait of Hormuz -- though Trump has yet to approve any deployment. Iran says it has closed the Strait of Hormuz, which previously accounted for a quarter of the world's seaborne oil trade and a fifth of liquefied natural gas shipments, to vessels from hostile nations. Aluminium plans targeted On another front, Israeli attacks have continued in Lebanon, which was drawn into the war when Hezbollah fired rockets at Israel on March 2. The Lebanese health ministry said on Sunday that the death toll from Israeli strikes had surpassed 1,200. Hundreds of mourners attended the funeral near Beirut on Sunday of three journalists killed by the Israeli military in southern Lebanon on Saturday. In the Gulf, Iranian forces said they had fired a volley of missiles and drones at plants belonging to two of the world's largest aluminium producers in Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates, targeting what they described as industries linked to the US military. Emirates Global Aluminium said an Iranian attack wounded six and caused significant damage to its plant, while Bahraini state media said two Aluminium Bahrain employees were injured. In Kuwait, the defence ministry said 10 service members were injured in an attack on a military camp and 14 ballistic missiles and 12 hostile drones were detected in Kuwaiti airspace in the past 24 hours. In Israel, thick black smoke could be seen rising from an industrial complex in the Negev desert in images released by the Israel Fire and Rescue Authority. The military said the impact may have been caused by missile shrapnel.

- [Russian tanker heads to Cuba despite US oil blockade](#) (2026-03-30 00:37)

HAVANA, Cuba — A Russian oil tanker under US sanctions is due to arrive in Cuba by Tuesday despite a de facto American fuel blockade of the energy-starved island, according to shipping data. The Anatoly Kolodkin, which is carrying 730,000 barrels of crude, was off the eastern tip of Cuba on Sunday, according to shipping tracker MarineTraffic. The tanker, traveling at 12 knots, is now scheduled to arrive at the western port of Matanzas on Tuesday. It was previously forecast to arrive Monday. It would be the first shipment of oil to the island since January, bringing some temporary relief to a country of 9.6 million people that has endured a deepening energy and economic crisis. Communist-ruled Cuba lost its main regional ally and oil supplier in January when US forces captured Venezuela's socialist leader Nicolas Maduro. US President Donald Trump subsequently threatened to impose tariffs on any country sending oil to Cuba and has mused about "taking" the island. He renewed his threats on Friday, saying "Cuba is next" at an investment forum in Miami. Jorge Pinon, an expert on Cuba's energy sector at the University of Texas at Austin, said he was surprised the United States did not try to intercept the Russian tanker before it approached Cuba. "I think now the chances that the United States will try to stop her have basically disappeared," Pinon told AFP. Once the boat enters Cuban waters, he said, it "is almost impossible for the US government to stop it." The New York Times, citing an

unnamed US official briefed on the matter, said the US Coast Guard was allowing the tanker to reach Cuba. The US Coast Guard did not reply to an AFP request for comment. Daily outages After Washington launched the oil blockade, President Miguel Diaz-Canel imposed emergency measures to conserve fuel, including strict rationing of gasoline. He warned this month that "any external aggressor will encounter an unbreakable resistance." Fuel prices have soared, public transport has dwindled and some airlines have suspended flights to Cuba, hitting the country's fragile economy. Cubans have endured regular outages as its aging power plants struggle to meet demand, with seven nationwide blackouts since 2024, including two this month and sparking rare protests. A humanitarian aid convoy brought more than 50 tonnes of medicine, food, solar panels and other goods to Cuba by air and sea in the past week, with two sailboats bringing the last shipments from Mexico on Saturday. The Anatoly Kolodkin, which is under US sanctions, left the Russian port of Primorsk on March 8. It was escorted by a Russian navy ship across the English Channel, but the two vessels parted ways when the tanker entered the Atlantic, according to the British Royal Navy. Another ship that was reportedly carrying Russian diesel to Cuba, the Hong Kong-flagged Sea Horse, arrived in Venezuela instead earlier this week. Diesel an 'urgent need' Once the Anatoly Kolodkin's crude arrives in Cuba, it would take about 15-20 days to process the oil and another 5-10 days to deliver its refined products, Pinon said. "The urgent need today in Cuba is diesel," the former oil executive said. The Russian shipment could be converted into 250,000 barrels of diesel, enough to cover the country's demand for around 12.5 days, according to Pinon. Pinon said the government would have to decide whether to use the fuel for backup power generators or for the buses, tractors and trains needed to keep the economy going for two weeks. "If you are Diaz-Canel or somebody making the decision, you go, 'OK, where where do I go with that diesel?'" he said. "Do I want to generate more electricity so there are less apagones (blackouts)? Or do I want to put it in the transportation sector?"

- [UN force in southern Lebanon says peacekeeper killed](#) (2026-03-30 00:34)

BEIRUT, Lebanon — The UN force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) said one of their peacekeepers was killed after a projectile hit one of their positions late Sunday. "A peacekeeper was tragically killed last night when a projectile exploded in a UNIFIL position near Adchit Al Qusayr," said Monday's statement. "Another was critically injured." The UNIFIL statement said they did not know the origin of the projectile but had launched an investigation to find out. "No one should ever lose their life serving the cause of peace," it added. State media NNA reported earlier that the position hit belonged to the Indonesian battalion serving with UNIFIL. The town of Adchit al Qusayr lies near Lebanon's southern border with Israel, where Israeli forces have been battling Hezbollah fighters for nearly a month. The war in the Middle East spread to Lebanon in early March after Iran-backed Hezbollah fired rockets at Israel. Their attack came after the assassination of Iran's Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei on the first day of the US-Israeli offensive. Israel has retaliated with wide-ranging airstrikes on Lebanon and Israeli forces are now advancing into numerous towns in southern Lebanon. Israeli officials say they intend to set up a security zone extending 30 kilometers from the Israeli border to protect those living in

northern Israel. UNIFIL has reported that its positions have been hit more than once since the start of the latest fighting. On March 7, three Ghanaian soldiers were wounded by gunfire in a border town in southern Lebanon.

- [Israel approves 2026 budget with increased defence spending](#) (2026-03-30 00:30)

Jerusalem — Israel's parliament approved the 2026 budget early Monday, providing for a significant increase in military spending as the country remains engaged in wars on multiple fronts. Lawmakers passed the budget with 62 votes in favour and 55 against. The vote averted an automatic government collapse and snap election that would have followed failure to pass the budget by March's end, under Israeli law. The proposed total expenditure budget for 2026 amounts to approximately 850 billion Israeli shekels (NIS) or \$270 billion. "As part of the updated budget, and in light of Operation 'Roaring Lion', more than NIS 30 billion (about \$10 billion) has been added to the ministry of defence budget, bringing it to over NIS 142 billion," the parliament said in a statement, using the name Israel has given to the war with Iran. Israel's defence spending has steadily increased since the war in Gaza broke out following Hamas's attack on Israel on October 7, 2023. In addition to fighting the new war against Iran with its ally the United States since February 28, Israel is also battling Iran-backed Islamist movement Hezbollah in southern Lebanon. Ahead of the vote, lawmakers debated the budget proposals late on Sunday. Far-right Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich called it a "historic turning point" for Israel. "We have the capacity to reshape the Middle East. This budget positions the nation to win," Smotrich said. "We are passing this budget under a right-wing government committed to fulfilling its term and achieving its missions in security, the economy and judicial reform." "This term will be remembered as a historic turning point for the State of Israel, redefining both our security approach and our economy," Smotrich added. He also praised Israel's macroeconomic performance as "astonishing" despite the war. 'Greatest theft' Main opposition leader Yair Lapid described it as "the greatest theft in the state's history". "Six billion shekels are coalition funds that this government is allocating to itself -- to corruption and draft evasion," Lapid said. "The Israeli public is not foolish. It understands that this budget is a windfall for the corrupt and for those who evade responsibility -- celebrating at our expense," he added. Earlier this week, Lapid had lashed out at the government over its handling of the war in Iran, specifically criticising delays in legislation that would allow ultra-Orthodox Jews, who are largely exempt from military service, to be conscripted. The law aligns with the demands of a broad majority of Israelis, who are increasingly opposed to the ultra-Orthodox exemptions. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who relies on his ultra-Orthodox party allies to maintain power, has delayed the legislation's adoption. The surge in defence spending in the budget will lead to a three-percent cut across all other ministries, which was also strongly criticised by Lapid. But Netanyahu's government, dependent on the support of its ultra-Orthodox and settler allies for its survival, has approved a significant increase in funds earmarked exclusively for them. Ultra-Orthodox parties will receive more than \$750 million in additional funds for private schools they control. Despite the sweeping cuts imposed on all civilian budgets, funding for settlements has remained unchanged, according to a report by the anti-settlement group Peace

Now. The Peace Now report denounced the measure as "daylight robbery of public funds" for the benefit of a small group within the government's base. On December 4, the government approved spending more than \$875 million over five years to develop settlements in the occupied West Bank, which are illegal under international law.

- [PH, China reopen oil exploration talks](#) (2026-03-29 16:10)

(UPDATE) THE Philippines and China have made "initial exchanges" on potential oil and gas exploration in the South China Sea, nearly four years since previous talks were terminated in 2022. The subject was raised at the just-concluded Bilateral Consultative Mechanism (BCM) on South China Sea meeting in Fujian, China, on March 28. In a statement late Saturday, the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) said both sides took note of the progress made in other possible areas of cooperation to "increase confidence in the maritime domain," including communication between their coast guards and ocean meteorology. The two sides had "frank and thorough exchange of views" on the situation in the South China Sea, where Manila "firmly reiterated" its position and raised concerns over China's actions that have "disrupted lawful activities and posed risks at sea," the DFA said. "The Philippines emphasized the need for diplomacy and communication for managing differences at sea, and upholding international law, particularly the 1982 UNCLOS (United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea) and the 2016 South China Sea Arbitral Award," it said. The BCM was held back-to-back with the 24th Foreign Ministry Consultations (FMC), and both were led by Foreign Affairs Undersecretary Leo Herrera-Lim and Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Sun Weidong. At the FMC, Manila said it would handle all bilateral issues in line with the Philippine national interest, "while advancing mutually beneficial cooperation, especially in the economic and people-to-people areas." The two sides brought up the need to stabilize access to energy and fertilizers, as well as potential cooperation in green and renewable energy, trade and agriculture, against the backdrop of current global developments, including the Middle East crisis. The DFA said it was agreed that the reconvening of appropriate bilateral mechanisms was a necessary step in reopening negotiations. Increasing the tourist traffic between the two countries through visa-free arrangements, enhanced connectivity, and prospective new direct air routes. Manila emphasized that it would play a "responsible and professional role" as chair of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) this year, especially on managing regional talks, upholding Asean centrality, and reinforcing a rules-based order. The DFA said the Philippines and China would convene a bilateral foreign ministers' meeting "within the year" following these latest talks. Critical time A geopolitical analyst on Sunday said renewed discussions between the Philippines and China on possible joint oil and gas exploration in the South China Sea come at a critical time, as global supply uncertainties mount due to tensions in the Middle East. In an interview with The Manila Times, Herman Tiu Laurel, president of the Manila-based think tank Asian Century Philippines Strategic Studies Institute (ACPSSI), said the reopening of talks was "very late in the day," driven by what he described as a potentially severe oil and gas supply crisis linked to the conflict pitting the United States and Israel against Iran. Tiu Laurel said China was concerned about the Philippines' consistency in previous

agreements, citing what he described as policy reversals and “flip-flopping” since initial engagements in 2013. He also pointed to the Philippines’ termination in 2022 of a joint exploration agreement reached in 2018 between Xi Jinping and Rodrigo Duterte. According to Tiu Laurel, former Foreign Affairs secretary Teodoro Locsin Jr. announced the unilateral termination of the agreement during the transition from the Duterte administration to that of Ferdinand Marcos Jr. Tiu Laurel said Duterte had opposed the move and warned that abandoning the agreement could lead to tensions. He added that the current administration should provide assurances of “sincerity” if it intends to pursue joint development with China. He also questioned whether Manila’s renewed engagement would be sustained, noting uncertainties over how external geopolitical pressures, particularly from the US, might influence policy direction.

- [Worries about global economic pain deepen](#) (2026-03-29 16:09)

US and Israeli attacks on Iran have driven up prices, darkened the outlook for the world economy, sent global stock markets reeling, and forced developing countries to ration fuel and subsidize energy costs to protect their poorest. Ongoing strikes and counterstrikes on Persian Gulf refineries, pipelines, gas fields and tanker terminals threaten to prolong the global economic pain for months, even years. “A week ago or certainly two weeks ago, I would have said: If the war stopped that day, the long-term implications would be pretty small,” said Christopher Knittel, an energy economist at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. “But what we’re seeing is infrastructure actually being destroyed, which means the ramifications of this war are going to be long-lived.” Iran has hit Qatar’s Ras Laffan natural gas terminal, which produces 20 percent of the world’s liquefied natural gas. The March 18 strike wiped out 17 percent of Qatar’s LNG export capacity and repairs will take up to five years, state-owned QatarEnergy said. The war caused an oil shock from the get-go. Iran responded to US and Israeli attacks on Feb. 28 by effectively closing off the Strait of Hormuz, a transit point for a fifth of the world’s oil, by threatening tankers trying to pass through. Gulf oil exporters like Kuwait and Iraq cut production because there was nowhere for their oil to go without access to the strait. The loss of 20 million barrels of oil a day delivered what the International Energy Agency calls the “largest supply disruption in the history of the global oil market.” The price for a barrel of Brent crude oil climbed 3.4 percent on Friday to settle at \$105.32. That was up from roughly \$70 just before the war began. Benchmark US crude rose 5.5 percent to settle at \$99.64 per barrel. “Historically, oil price shocks like this have led to global recessions,” Knittel said. The war also has dredged up a bad economic memory from the oil shocks of the 1970s: stagflation. “You’re raising the risk of higher inflation and lower growth,” said the Harvard Kennedy School’s Carmen Reinhart, a former World Bank chief economist. Gita Gopinath, former chief economist at the International Monetary Fund, recently wrote that global economic growth, expected before the war to register 3.3 percent this year, would be 0.3 to 0.4 percentage points lower if oil prices averaged \$85 a barrel in 2026. Fertilizer shortages and price hikes hurt farmers. The Persian Gulf accounts for a big share of exports of two key fertilizers, a third of urea and a quarter of ammonia. Producers in the region enjoy an advantage: easy

access to low-cost natural gas, the primary feedstock for nitrogen fertilizers. Up to 40 percent of world exports of nitrogen fertilizer pass through the Strait of Hormuz. Now that the passage is blocked, urea prices are up 50 percent since the war and ammonia 20 percent. Big agricultural producer Brazil is especially vulnerable because it gets 85 percent of its fertilizer from imports, Alpine Macro commodity strategist Kelly Xu wrote in a commentary. Egypt, a big fertilizer producer itself, needs natural gas to make the stuff and production falters when it can't get enough. Eventually, higher fertilizer prices are likely to make food more expensive and less abundant as farmers skimp on it and get lower yields. The squeeze on food supplies will land hardest on families in poorer countries. The war also has disrupted world supplies of helium, a byproduct of natural gas and a key input in chipmaking, rockets and medical imaging. Qatar makes helium at the Ros Laffan facility and supplies a third of the world's helium. Rationing gas and limiting the air conditioning "No country will be immune to the effects of this crisis if it continues to go in this direction," International Energy Agency head Fatih Birol said on March 23. Poorer countries will be hit hardest and face the biggest energy shortages "because they will be outbid when competing for the remaining oil and natural gas," said Lutz Kilian, director of the Center for Energy and the Economy at the Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas. Asia is especially exposed: More than 80 percent of the oil and LNG that passes through the Strait of Hormuz is headed there. In the Philippines, government offices are now open just four days a week and bureaucrats must limit the use of air conditioning to nothing cooler than 75 F (24 C). In Thailand, public workers have been told to take the stairs instead of elevators. India is the world's second-biggest importer of liquefied petroleum gas, which is used in cooking. The Indian government is giving households priority over businesses as it allocates its limited supply and absorbing most of the price increases to keep costs low for poor families. But LPG shortages have forced some eateries to shorten hours, close temporarily or drop dishes like curries and deep-fried snacks requiring a lot of energy. South Korea, dependent on energy imports, is restricting the use of cars by public employees and has reinstated fuel price caps that had been dropped in the 1990s.

- [DOLE releases P1.2B standby fund for vulnerable workers](#) (2026-03-29 16:08)

THE Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) is ramping up its response to the national energy emergency, setting aside P1.2 billion in standby funds to protect the country's most vulnerable workers from the effects of the Middle East crisis. Labor Secretary Bienvenido Laguesma said over the weekend that the move aligns with the government's rollout of the Unified Package for Livelihoods, Industry, Food, and Transport (Uplift) under Executive Order 110, designed to cushion the economic shocks of global energy disruptions on the domestic economy. At the core of the DOLE's push were the Tulong Panghanapbuhay sa Ating Disadvantaged Workers (Tupad) emergency employment program and the DOLE Integrated Livelihood Program (DILP). Tupad offers emergency employment, giving affected workers community jobs for 10 to 30 days. Beneficiaries would receive the daily minimum wage prevailing in their region. The DILP is the department's flagship program that provides vulnerable and marginalized workers access to resources, such as working capital in the form of

raw materials, equipment, tools and jigs. Laguesma said Tupad and DILP “are being mobilized to support workers at risk of displacement as the energy crisis ripples across industries.” In the first quarter of 2026, emergency employment through Tupad and livelihood assistance through DILP benefited 110,106 workers, with total disbursements reaching P753.69 million. To support Uplift, the department is working closely with agencies such as the Department of Transportation, Department of Social Welfare and Development, Department of the Interior and Local Government, and local government units. Initial efforts will focus on transport workers to help maintain mobility and economic activity, with plans to extend assistance to sectors like agriculture and fisheries, Laguesma said. Repatriated overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) were also being attended to. In coordination with the Department of Migrant Workers and Overseas Workers Welfare Administration, the labor department is lining up job matching, skills training through Technical Education and Skills Development Authority, and livelihood assistance for displaced OFWs. A major highlight is the upcoming “Bayanihan para sa Balikbayang Manggagawa,” a one-stop reintegration platform for returning workers and their families. On the jobs front, DOLE has staged 144 job fairs nationwide since January, Laguesma said. Meanwhile, Sen. Francis Pangilinan over the weekend said the proposed P10-billion financial package for affected agricultural sectors would only benefit four million farmers and 400,000 fishermen. Pangilinan said there are over 10 million farmers and 2.5 million fishermen affected by the mounting economic pressures from the Middle East war. He said the one-time P2,325 cash aid to concerned farmworkers and fisherfolk would come from the Presidential Assistance to Farmers and Fisherfolk under the 2026 budget. About 15,000 fishermen would receive fuel assistance from the P150-million 2025 continuing appropriation, with P75 million each allotted to the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources and the Department of Agriculture (DA). Pangilinan called for more government support for the agriculture and fishery sectors reeling from surging oil prices, which drive up the cost of fuel, transportation, and fertilizer costs. Pangilinan said other sources could be tapped, such as the DA’s P1 billion Quick Response Fund (QRF). Other concerned agencies can tap certain items under their 2026 allocations to support local food producers, he said. These include the P3.11-billion budget of the Agricultural Credit Policy Council, the P2.4-billion budget for high-value crops under the DA, the P6.5-billion budget of the Philippine Crop Insurance Corp., and the DA’s QRF.

- [Manufacturers to defer price hikes until April 16](#) (2026-03-29 16:07)

MANUFACTURERS have pledged not to raise the prices of basic necessities and prime commodities until April 16, the DTI said in a statement on Saturday. “This assurance follows the DTI’s meeting with major manufacturers and retailers to hold off on price increases until April 16, 2026, ensuring stability for Filipino consumers amid the ongoing Middle East tensions,” the DTI said. Trade Secretary Cristina Roque had a virtual meeting with the manufacturers on March 28. Among them were Milk Corporation, Chattrade Enterprises, Commonwealth Foods Inc., Century Pacific Food Inc. (CPFI), Ecosential Foods Corp., Sevilla Candle Factory Inc., Lorenzana Food Corp., Monde Nissin, Nestle Philippines, Procter & Gamble Philippines Inc., San Miguel Foods, Slord Development Corp., Unilever Philippines Inc., Universal Canning Inc., Universal

Robina Corp., Virginia Food Inc., Wellmade Manufacturing Corp., and a representative from the Canned Sardines Association of the Philippines (CSAP). Retailers who agreed not to raise prices include Robinsons Retail Holdings, Inc., SM Markets (SM Supermarket, SM Hypermarket, Savemore), Metro Retail Stores Group Inc., and the Philippine Amalgamated Supermarkets Association. Complying with Executive Order 110, the DTI will intensify its nationwide monitoring to ensure the commitments are reflected at the retail level. It said it maintains jurisdiction over “726 variants of essential products in which 196 stock keeping units include a suggested retail price (SRP), including canned sardines, canned meat, coffee, processed milk, instant noodles, condiments, laundry soap, toilet soap, candles, salt, battery, bottled water, and bread.” On Friday, the department announced that the supply and prices of basic necessities and prime commodities remained stable. The DTI also clarified that the automatic nationwide price freeze is not in effect, despite President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.’s declaration of a state of national energy emergency. Under the Price Act (Republic Act 7581), prices are automatically frozen only under specific conditions, such as a state of calamity or similar emergency declarations. Enacted into law in 1992, the Price Act ensures fair pricing and availability of basic necessities and prime commodities, especially during times of calamities and emergencies. Violators face a fine of from P5,000 to P2 million. Last week, the trade chief met with 21 manufacturers of canned sardines, bread, bottled water, instant noodles, coffee, canned meat, toilet soap and candles, and agreed not to increase the prices for 30 days. Chynna Grace Ong and the Philippine News Agency Among them were Mega, Ligo, Unipak, Lucky 7, Fresca, Golden Town, Morjon, Wilkins, Nature’s Spring, Pinoy Tasty and Pandesal, Safeguard, Tide, Green Cross, Datu Puti, Lorins, and others. On Sunday, Executive Secretary Ralph Recto commended businesses that deferred price increases for their show of solidarity with consumers. “We commend businesses that have deferred price increases as an act of solidarity with the public, commendably placing patriotism before profits,” Recto said. He said the move aligns with government interventions to stabilize the country’s fuel supply and cushion the public from price shocks. The government has secured oil from both traditional and alternative sources, and received commitments from industry players like Petron and Seaoil to stabilize supply lines. The Department of Energy has also facilitated the procurement of 1.04 million barrels of diesel, with initial shipments expected this week. Fuel subsidies have also been distributed to transport operators, farmers and fisherfolk. Energy conservation measures are being enforced in government offices, including reduced fuel use for non-essential vehicles and monitoring of electricity consumption, Recto said.

- [Holy Monday: Time to reflect on faith](#) (2026-03-29 16:06)

HOLY Monday is a day often overlooked during Holy Week. It comes right after Palm Sunday, when Jesus Christ was welcomed in Jerusalem, but what does it signify? The Gospel of Mark 11:11–12 revealed that after spending the evening in Bethany, Jesus and his disciples set out for Jerusalem early Monday. Jesus then encountered a fig tree and cursed it for its fruitlessness. Some interpreted the act as God’s judgment on the lack of genuine faith by believers. After arriving in Jerusalem, he found commerce and corruption in the temple, where there should

have been worship and reverence. In a fit of rage, he overturned the tables, condemning the practice. “My house will be called a house of prayer, but you are making it a den of robbers,” he said. For Filipino Catholics, Holy Monday serves as a reminder to examine one’s faith and actions. Fr. Cyrain Cabuenas of Borongan, Eastern Samar, said in his homily that the day calls on the faithful to reflect on how people respond to truth, particularly in the face of adversity. “The Passion of Christ is not only about His suffering; it is also about how people respond to truth. Jesus stood for what was right, yet He was rejected. Those in authority chose to protect themselves instead of doing what was just, and the crowd allowed itself to be influenced, choosing noise over truth. This is what makes Holy Week uncomfortable, because it asks a question we cannot avoid: where do we stand when truth is at risk?” Cabuenas said. He said the message of Holy Week remains relevant in the Philippine context, where issues such as corruption, political conflict, and rising living costs continue to burden many Filipinos. “We see it when power is used for personal gain, when truth is ignored, and when the innocent suffer while justice seems slow or absent,” he said. Cabuenas cautioned the faithful against reducing Holy Week to rituals, such as attending Mass or joining processions, without allowing it to inspire real change. “If nothing changes — if corruption continues, injustice remains, and the poor are still forgotten — then something essential is missing. Holy Week is not meant to be just an annual routine; it is meant to change us,” he said. He asked Filipinos to live out their faith in honesty, integrity and compassion, even in small, everyday choices, stressing that meaningful change begins within individuals. In his Holy Week message to the nation, President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. called on Filipinos to unite for the shared goal of building a country grounded in faith and selfless service to others. The president urged every citizen to “take a moment for a brief pause, rest, and reflection.” “From His triumphant entry into Jerusalem, to the suffering of the Cross at Calvary, and finally to the glory of His Resurrection, we witness a love so powerful that it embraces human suffering and conquers even death,” he said. The immeasurable love of Jesus Christ, he said, reflects a love that embraces human suffering and triumphs over death. “The Passion of Christ reminds us that true greatness is not found in power, but in sacrifice; not in privilege, but in service; and not in comfort, but in the courage to carry the burdens of others,” he said. He called on the faithful to renew their commitment to loving and serving one another, especially in times of hardship, and to remain steadfast in faith despite life’s trials. “For in every act of compassion, every hand extended to those in need, and every sacrifice made for the good of others, we keep alive the spirit of His message,” the president said. Malacañang has declared April 2, Maundy Thursday, and April 3, Good Friday, as regular holidays. Black Saturday, April 4, was declared a special non-working holiday. Leyte 1st District Rep. Ferdinand Martin Romualdez on Sunday said Holy Week “is a time for prayer and reflection. This is a time for remembering the great love of God — a love that saved us, gave hope, and continues to guide us back to Him.” “Amid the conflicts and problems we face, may this day serve as an invitation for us to pause, reflect, and repent,” he said. “This is a time to examine our hearts, our shortcomings, and the times when we fell short in loving. In the quiet of prayer, may we find the strength to carry on, the courage to forgive, and the heart ready to love again — especially in times when this is most difficult to do.”

- [Customs fast-tracks fuel shipments](#) (2026-03-29 16:05)

THE Bureau of Customs (BOC) is stepping on the gas to keep the country's fuel lifeline flowing, rolling out aggressive measures to fast-track petroleum imports while maintaining round-the-clock monitoring across all ports. Customs Commissioner Ariel Nepomuceno issued Office of the Commissioner Memorandum 36-2006 over the weekend, directing all ports to give fuel shipments top priority. The order mandates faster unloading, streamlined customs clearance, zero tolerance for delays, tighter interagency coordination, and continuous oversight — ensuring critical fuel cargo moves from ship to shore without a hitch. “Ensuring the timely release of petroleum products is critical to keep the country moving. That is why we are making sure petroleum shipments are processed without delay and closely monitored at all times. Our goal is simple — to keep supply steady and ensure that no disruption reaches our industries or our communities,” Nepomuceno said. Nepomuceno gave assurances that safeguards are in place to ensure that every drop of fuel entering the country is properly taxed. He said the Fuel Marking Program ensures petroleum products are authenticated at the depot level, quality and tax compliance are verified, and any irregular shipment is immediately flagged. At sea, the bureau's vessel tracking system keeps tankers under constant watch even before they reach Philippine waters. This allows authorities to monitor routes, anticipate arrivals, and conduct immediate inspections — closing gaps from offshore transit to final discharge. According to Nepomuceno, the bureau is also working with the Department of Energy (DOE) for real-time monitoring of fuel shipments and depot inventories across the country. Nepomuceno pointed out that petroleum imports generate roughly P200 billion annually in revenues, making them a critical pillar of government collections. Efficient processing and tight regulation are not just operational priorities but also economic imperatives. In San Fernando, La Union, the BOC cleared the arrival of 9.4 million liters of diesel for PNOC at Seaoil Bangar Terminal, the largest oil import hub in Region I. The shipment, part of the Department of Energy's Strategic Fuel Reserve program, was processed and discharged at speed following tight coordination and pre-clearance checks, reinforcing fuel stability across Luzon. Meanwhile, in Limay, Bataan, customs teams prioritized the handling of major crude oil delivered by the Sara Sky. The vessel, loaded with over 100,000 barrels of ESPO Blend crude from Russia, was swiftly cleared and unloaded at the Petron Bataan Refinery, ensuring immediate integration into the country's fuel supply chain. Nepomuceno commended the two ports for their timely action. “I commend the Port of San Fernando, La Union, and the Port of Limay for their quick and efficient handling of these priority fuel shipments from Russia and Japan. Their swift action and coordination ensured that essential petroleum products were released without delay.”

- [SSS eyes loan payment moratorium, penalty condonation](#) (2026-03-29 16:04)

THE Social Security System (SSS) is studying loan payment moratorium for its members and condonation program for employers to ease the burden of surging fuel prices. SSS President and CEO Robert Joseph de Claro said the measures aim to provide immediate relief to SSS members and employers struggling with financial difficulties in the wake of the unabated increase in fuel costs due to the war in the Middle East. “This would ensure they can continue to access vital

benefits without an added burden,” de Claro said in a statement. He said the agency is also assessing options for extending contribution payment deadlines for employers and individual paying members, providing greater flexibility amid the current situation. “We recognize the hardships many Filipinos are enduring as we remain committed to protecting the welfare of our over 40 million members,” de Claro said. “We are expediting internal reviews and consultations with stakeholders to roll out these support initiatives as swiftly as possible, while safeguarding the long-term sustainability of the SSS fund,” he added. Mandated to provide social protection to private sector workers, self-employed individuals and overseas Filipino workers, the SSS said it is also actively pursuing digital initiatives to simplify administrative and implementation processes to reduce compliance burden and ensure the timely delivery of relief measures and services. The SSS assured the public that updates on these programs will be announced through official channels once finalized. Members and employers were encouraged to visit www.sss.gov.ph or its official social media channels for the latest information on its programs.

- [Medialdea stable after fainting at Duterte birthday solidarity walk](#) (2026-03-29 16:03)

FORMER executive secretary Salvador Medialdea was reported to be in stable condition after he fainted during a solidarity walk held for former president Rodrigo Duterte’s 81st birthday on Saturday, March 28. Medialdea, 74, was delivering a speech at Rizal Park along San Pedro Street in Davao City when he suddenly stopped, appeared to lose his balance, and struggled to continue, prompting concern from the crowd. Emergency responders from Davao City Central 911 immediately assisted him. He was taken off the stage in a wheelchair and transported by ambulance to Davao Doctors Hospital. Organizers said Medialdea, who has a heart ailment, became emotional during his remarks. He was initially brought to the hospital for a routine checkup. A medical procedure for Medialdea was scheduled for Sunday, March 29, with attending physicians reporting that he remained in stable condition. Medialdea, a close ally of Duterte, served as executive secretary during the former president’s administration and had accompanied him during his arrest and initial appearance before the International Criminal Court in March 2025. The solidarity walk drew several supporters and followed a route from Roxas Avenue through C.M. Recto Street to San Pedro Street in Davao.

- [Tulfo pushes work from home, ride-sharing](#) (2026-03-29 16:02)

SEN. Erwin Tulfo raised the need to bring back the work-from-home (WFH) setup for the private and government sectors amid the continuous rise in fuel prices triggered by the Middle East war. He said that his proposal was implemented during the pandemic and was proven effective. “If a worker’s physical presence or activity is not required at the workplace, why not just have them report online?” Tulfo asked. “For instance, those in office roles like planning, research, admin, customer service, and other similar jobs can work from home,” he said on Sunday. Even medical consultations and checkups were done online by doctors during the pandemic, he added. “Why not do it again now?” “And if physical presence is required, such as in manufacturing, hotels, restaurants, or hospitals, colleagues can carpool in one vehicle and

split the gas costs,” Tulfo said in a statement. The senator also suggested that officemates could book through ride-hailing apps and share the fare. “I’ve noticed that the number of stranded passengers on the streets seems to be increasing these days because fewer PUVs (public utility vehicles) are operating due to the high cost of fuel,” he said. “With these steps that we have tried before, workers will be able to save,” Tulfo said. Sen. Joel Villanueva earlier sought the expansion of WFH arrangements to reduce fuel consumption and shield Filipinos from the effects of rising oil prices. He urged the government and the private sector to adopt other flexible work schemes to address possible fare hike. Villanueva, author of Republic Act 11165 or the Work-From-Home law, said the measure provides a ready policy framework that can be maximized to lessen commuting at a time when global oil prices are climbing due to geopolitical tensions in the Middle East. Signed into law in 2018, the law institutionalized work-from-home arrangements in the private sector, allowing employees to perform their duties from alternative workplaces using telecommunications and digital technology. He said that aside from work from home schemes, both the government and the private sector could also adopt other alternative work arrangements that reduce commuting demand, such as hybrid work setups, compressed workweeks, staggered working hours, and flexible schedules. “These alternative work arrangements can help decongest our roads, lower fuel consumption, and allow workers to save on transportation costs,” Villanueva said in a statement.

- ['Unbundling hospital charges a step backward'](#) (2026-03-29 16:01)

A health reform advocate criticized the proposal of the Department of Health (DoH) to unbundle hospital charges, calling it “a step backward.” The proposal comes after the DOH reacted to the Private Hospitals Association of the Philippines Inc. (PHAPI) floating the idea of implementing a five percent increase in hospital fees as costs of fuel and basic commodities increase. DoH Spokesman Albert Domingo called for a breakdown of hospital charges to provide greater transparency. He said unbundling costs like room rates, electricity, fuel, and staff salaries would allow the public to understand how healthcare prices are affected by the rising oil prices. “It’s time to ‘unbundle’ or ‘break down’ the charges of hospitals and health facilities. Don’t just say ‘room rate’ —how much is charged for electricity? For gasoline/diesel? For nurses’ salaries?” Domingo said. Dr. Tony Leachon told The Manila Times on Sunday the DoH’s proposal would erode the integration, equity, and universality that the Universal Health Care (UHC) Law and the Sin Tax Law were meant to achieve. “The Sin Tax Law and the Universal Health Care Law were never meant to stand alone. They were conceived as twin pillars of reform—one raising resources from harmful consumption, the other ensuring those resources translate into accessible, equitable health services. To unbundle them is not innovation; it is a betrayal of their essence,” he said. Aside from the fragmentation, Leachon argued that bundling hospital charges ensures solidarity, where wealthier individuals contribute more while the poorer population benefits. He said unbundling risks creates inequality by removing this balance. Healthcare should not be treated as a commodity to be broken into pieces, but as a fundamental right that must be guaranteed for all Filipinos, he

said. “Unbundling is not progress—it is a step backward,” Leachon said. He called on policymakers to resist the proposal and instead focus on strengthening the integration of the Sin Tax and UHC laws.

- [Palace touts public-private ‘synergy’ in boosting energy security](#) (2026-03-29 16:01)

MALACAÑANG on Sunday gave assurances the country’s energy security is steadily stabilizing despite the global oil crisis triggered by the war in the Middle East. In a statement, Executive Secretary Ralph Recto said the “synergy of public-private efforts,” spearheaded by President Ferdinand Marcos Jr., is now “bearing fruits that guarantee energy security” as the government addresses the effects “of a crisis not of its own making.” Recto cited, among others, the commitment of oil firms to provide a steady supply of oil and petroleum products despite the volatility in the international market. One such company is Petron Corp., which sourced its supply from both traditional and alternative sources. Last week, its procurement of more than 700,000 barrels of Russian crude oil was delivered. “Meanwhile, the oil diplomacy ably conducted by energy officials led by (Department of Energy) Secretary Sharon Garin has resulted in the firm order of 1.04 million barrels of diesel, with the first batch arriving this week. From Indonesia also comes the ironclad guarantee of a steady supply of coal. The news that new wells of Malampaya will go on stream by the last quarter of this year further boosts our energy security,” he said. “Believing that these gains will be sustained, we fully back the efforts of Petron, Seaoil, other oil companies, the DOE (Department of Energy), and PNOC (Philippine National Oil Company) to keep the supply lines flowing so the economy is powered up, the country running, and our lives minimally disrupted,” Recto said. He pointed to the recently signed Republic Act 12316 which grants the president the authority to suspend or reduce excise taxes on fuel as another mitigating measure to cushion the impact of skyrocketing pump prices. These initiatives, however, “will all be for naught” if not felt by the people, Recto said. Government assistance, such as fuel subsidies and discounted rides and toll fees, has been rolled out to ease the burden of vulnerable sectors. Around 250,000 public transport drivers — bus, jeepney, tricycle, and transport network vehicle service (TNVS) — have benefited from the financial aid. Farmers and fisherfolk will also receive assistance to prevent fuel costs from driving up food prices. The government’s vehicle fleet, except those used for public safety and health services, “has been put on a strict gas diet,” Recto said.

- [Caloocan extends free legal aid to 29 women PDLs](#) (2026-03-29 16:01)

TWENTY-NINE women who are currently detained at the custodial facility of the Caloocan Police became the beneficiaries of the free legal services from the city’s legal department, Mayor Dave Gonzalo Malapitan said on Sunday. Malapitan told The Manila Times via Viber that the initiative was part of the local government’s activities to mark International Women’s Month. He said the city government provided legal advice and assistance to the women PDLs in connection with the criminal cases filed against them in various trial courts in the city. The city chief executive said the project, led by the city’s Legal Department and Social Welfare and Development Office, is a regular undertaking to make services more accessible even to the most

vulnerable sectors of the community. Also, the mayor said that his administration remains committed to upholding justice and the rule of law, adding that, “the rights of people, especially those under preventive custody, must be given the highest level of respect.” He further said the local government is maximizing its resources to address crime incidents, which have been declining since early last year due to enhanced police visibility and law enforcers’ prompt response to emergencies.

- [LTFRB steps up safety checks ahead of Holy Week exodus](#) (2026-03-29 10:40)

MANILA, Philippines — The Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB) has begun intensified inspections of buses and public utility vehicles (PUVs) nationwide in preparation for the Holy Week travel surge. On Sunday, LTFRB Chairman Vigor Mendoza II ordered all regional directors to implement a nationwide roadworthiness inspection protocol. According to Mendoza, coordination with local government units (LGUs) and law enforcement agencies is critical to maximize road safety enforcement. “This is a yearly exodus, and we expect more people and vehicles on the road traveling to the provinces for religious activities, vacations, and other purposes,” Mendoza said. “Our goal is to ensure the safety of commuters and other road users by verifying the roadworthiness of buses and PUVs, as well as the physical and mental readiness of drivers.” He also emphasized the need for terminal operators to comply with regulations that safeguard passenger safety and comfort. The LTFRB has already intensified inspections of PUV terminals following complaints about dilapidated facilities. Hundreds of terminal owners and operators have been issued show-cause orders or notices of violation, and some facilities have been temporarily closed for serious safety breaches. “Aside from the safety of PUVs on the road, we also have to make sure passengers are comfortable and treated well inside the terminals,” Mendoza said. “There must be no excuses—violators should be called out and required to explain why they should not be penalized.” Millions of Filipinos are expected to travel to the provinces during the Holy Week break. Police forces have begun mobilization, and the LTFRB is coordinating closely to ensure the safety and comfort of all passengers.

- [NTC activates communications support program for Holy Week](#) (2026-03-29 08:54)

MANILA, Philippines — A nationwide public assistance operation program has been launched to ensure reliable and uninterrupted communications during the observance of Holy Week, the National Telecommunications Commission (NTC) said on Sunday. The NTC said all its regional offices (ROs) were instructed to collaborate with the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council, Civic Action Groups as well as Amateur Radio Groups. The ROs must also closely coordinate with local government units through their Local Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Offices to strengthen on-the-ground communication support and emergency response, according to the commission, a regulatory agency attached to the Department of Information and Communications Technology. To ensure the seamless operation of the communication support teams and further enhance readiness, the NTC said it would facilitate the swift issuance of temporary permits and licenses. It cited its importance especially as

millions of Filipinos are expected to travel nationwide. “Telecommunications and broadcast entities are likewise enjoined to actively assist in the timely and accurate dissemination of public advisories,” the agency said. The NTC, which has the mandate to supervise, control and adjudicate all telecommunications services, among others, throughout the country, reaffirmed its commitment to public safety, consumer welfare, and dependable communications services throughout Holy Week.

- [P10B aid not enough — Pangilinan](#) (2026-03-29 06:27)

Erratum: When this story was first published it said that the aid was for 400 fishermen, it should be 400,000 fishermen. We apologize for this mistake. MANILA, Philippines — Sen. Francis Pangilinan over the weekend said the proposed P10 billion financial aid is not enough since it would only benefit four million farmers and 400,000 fishermen. The senator said over 10 million farmers and 2.5 million fishermen were affected by the mounting economic pressures caused by the Middle East war. He said the one-time ₱2,325 cash aid to concerned farm workers and fisherfolks would come from the Presidential Assistance to Farmers and Fisherfolk under the 2026 budget. About 15,000 fishermen would receive fuel assistance from the ₱150 million 2025 continuing appropriation, with ₱75 million each allotted to the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources and the Department of Agriculture (DA). He sought additional government support for the agriculture and fishery sectors reeling from the global oil price surge, which drive up the cost of transportation and fertilizers. The senator said the situation affects small-scale farmers and fishermen who are among the most vulnerable sectors in the country. Pangilinan raised the possibility of tapping other sources of funds, such as the DA’s quick response fund. He expressed willingness to pass measures to make these funds readily available.

- [Philippines, China start oil exploration talks](#) (2026-03-29 03:14)

MANILA, Philippines—The Philippines and China have made “initial exchanges” on a potential oil and gas exploration in the South China Sea, nearly four years since previous talks were terminated in 2022. The subject was raised at the just concluded Bilateral Consultative Mechanism (BCM) on South China Sea meeting in Fujian, China, on March 28. In a statement late Saturday, the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) said both sides took note of the progress made in other possible areas of cooperation to “increase confidence in the maritime domain,” including coast guard-to-coast guard communication and ocean meteorology. The two sides had “frank and thorough exchange of views” on the situation in the South China Sea, where Manila “firmly reiterated” its position and raised concerns over China’s actions that have “disrupted lawful activities and posed risks at sea.” “The Philippines emphasized the need for diplomacy and communication for managing differences at sea, and upholding international law, particularly the 1982 UNCLOS (United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea) and the 2016 South China Sea Arbitral Award,” the DFA said. The BCM was held back-to-back with the 24th Foreign Ministry Consultations (FMC), both led by Foreign Affairs Undersecretary Leo Herrera-Lim and Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Sun Weidong. At the FMC, Manila said it would handle all bilateral issues in line with the Philippine national interest,

“while advancing mutually beneficial cooperation especially in the economic and people-to-people areas.” Both sides discussed the need to stabilize access to energy and fertilizers, as well as potential cooperation in green and renewable energy, trade, and agriculture, against the backdrop of current global developments, including the Middle East crisis. The DFA said both states identified reconvening of appropriate bilateral mechanisms as a necessary step. Also highlighted was improving two-way tourism, through visa-free arrangements, enhanced connectivity, and prospective new direct air routes. Meanwhile, Manila emphasized that it would play a “responsible and professional role” as chair of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations this year, especially on managing regional talks, upholding Asean centrality, and reinforcing a rules-based order. The DFA said the Philippines and China would convene a bilateral foreign ministers’ meeting “within the year,” following these latest talks.

- [Manhunt on for killers of five policemen](#) (2026-03-29 02:55)

COTABATO CITY – Police and military forces are tracking down gunmen who ambushed and killed five police officers and injured three others, including a police captain, on Saturday night in Shariff Aguak, Maguindanao del Sur. Police also condemned the attack against police officers who were returning to their barracks after peacekeeping operations in Shariff Aguak town. The victims were members of the 2nd Provincial Mobile Force Company of Maguindanao del Sur Police Provincial Office. “This deliberate and cowardly act against law enforcement officers will not be tolerated,” Brig. Gen. Jaysen de Guzman, BARMM police regional director, said in a statement Sunday. De Guzman said the Maguindanao del Sur police have launched intensified manhunt operations and are pursuing all leads to identify and arrest the perpetrators. “We assure the public that all necessary measures are being undertaken to bring those responsible to justice and hold them fully accountable,” he said. Capt. Guiseppe Tamayo, Maguindanao del Sur police provincial spokesman, said the police officers were en route to Camp Akilan, the provincial police headquarters, when they were ambushed by a group of gunmen in Barangay Poblacion Mother, Shariff Aguak, around 9:10 p.m. The five police officers were pronounced dead on arrival at the Bangsamoro Regional Medical Center in Datu Hoffer, Maguindanao del Sur. Three others remain in critical condition. Tamayo withheld their identities pending official information to their respective families. The Army’s 601st Infantry Battalion is joining the police manhunt in Shariff Aguak and nearby towns

- [Manila Water announces service disruption in parts of Metro Manila, Rizal](#) (2026-03-29 02:21)

MANILA, Philippines—The Manila Water Company (Manila Water) said some areas in Metro Manila and Rizal will have service interruptions due to maintenance and service improvement activities. From 9 p.m. on March 30 to 4 a.m. on March 31, portions of Barangay Mauway, Addition Hills, and Plainview in Mandaluyong City will experience service interruption due to the installation of a PVC valve along NCMH corner Road 10. On March 31, from 10 p.m. to 4 a.m. on April 1, residents in Barangay Santolan, Pasig City will be affected by a temporary water

interruption due to a zero pressure test along Evangelista Avenue up to the corner of Gabriel Street. During the same period, portions of Barangay Calzada in Taguig City, particularly along Lontoc and Virata streets, will experience service disruption due to step testing activities. Meanwhile, in Rizal province, parts of Barangay Manggahan in Rodriguez will have water interruption from 10 p.m. on April 6 to 4 a.m. on April 7 due to leak repair works along Millex Road. Also in Rizal, portions of Barangay San Roque in Antipolo City will be affected during the same period due to line meter replacement along Marigman Road. Manila Water advised affected residents to store enough water ahead of the scheduled activities and to flush their taps for a few minutes once water service resumes until it runs clear. The company added that customers may contact its hotline 1627 or its official social media pages for updates and concerns.

- [Some areas in Metro Manila, Cavite, Bulacan to have power interruptions due to maintenance works](#) (2026-03-29 01:52)

MANILA, Philippines—Several areas in Metro Manila, Cavite and Bulacan provinces will have power interruptions from March 30 to April 1 due to maintenance and upgrading works, Meralco said Sunday. On March 30, portions of Alapan–Bucandala Road and Alapan II-B Road in Barangay Alapan II-B, Imus City, Cavite will have no electricity from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. because of the relocation of facilities for a government road project. Also on March 30, parts of Fidela Soriano Street and areas in Barangay Hulong Duhat, Malabon City will experience power interruption from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. due to replacement of facilities. In Bulacan, portions of several barangay in Paombong and Hagonoy, including Binakod, Masukol, San Jose, San Roque, Sta. Cruz, Pugad, and Tibaguin, will be without power from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. because of pole replacement works. In Makati City, parts of San Miguel Village in Barangay Poblacion, particularly along F. Zobel and nearby streets, will have no power from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. due to the installation of facilities. On March 31, portions of Eulogio Amang Rodriguez Avenue and nearby streets in Barangay Manggahan, Santolan, and Dela Paz in Pasig City will have outages between 12:01 a.m. and 12:30 a.m. and again from 4:30 a.m. to 5 a.m. due to line reconductoring and facility replacement. Also in Pasig, parts of Ortigas Avenue and nearby areas in Barangay Ugong will be without power from 11 p.m. on March 31 to 12 a.m. on April 1 due to line reconstruction works. In Muntinlupa City, portions of Montillano Street, M. L. Quezon Avenue, and surrounding residential areas in Barangay Alabang and Cupang will have power interruption from 11 p.m. on March 31 to 4 a.m. on April 1 due to line reconductoring and relocation of facilities along the Philippine National Railways (PNR) tracks. In Manila, particularly in Tondo, parts of Tuazon and Morga streets and nearby areas will be without electricity from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. on March 31 due to line reconstruction works. Also on March 31, portions of Upli–Palulum Road and nearby areas in Alfonso, Cavite will have power interruption from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. for the installation of primary line facilities.

- [Iran-backed Houthis enter the month-old war and could further threaten global shipping](#) (2026-03-29 00:48)

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates — Iranian-backed Houthi rebels entered the month-old war in the Middle East on Saturday, claiming two missile launches at Israel. About 2,500 U.S. Marines arrived in the region. And Pakistan's government said that regional powers plan to meet Sunday to discuss how to end the fighting. The war has threatened global supplies of oil and natural gas, sparked fertilizer shortages and disrupted air travel. Iran's grip on the strategic Strait of Hormuz has shaken markets and prices. The United States and Israel continue to strike Iran, whose retaliatory attacks have targeted Israel and neighboring Gulf Arab states. More than 3,000 people have been killed. The Houthis' entry could further hurt global shipping if they again target vessels in the Bab el-Mandeb Strait off the Red Sea, through which about 12% of the world's trade typically passes. There could be limited relief after Iran on Friday agreed to allow humanitarian aid and agricultural shipments through the Strait of Hormuz following a United Nations request. U.S. President Donald Trump, meanwhile, has given Iran until April 6 to reopen the strait. Witnesses in Tehran reported heavy strikes late Saturday. Israel's military earlier said that it targeted Iran's naval weapons production facilities, and said that it would finish attacking essential weapons production sites within "a few days." Iran fired missiles toward Israel, while air defenses early Sunday intercepted missiles and drones across Gulf countries. The U.S. said that it has struck more than 11,000 Iranian targets in the war. And Ukraine's president visited Gulf nations as his country offers defense help with drones. Houthi involvement sparks concerns Houthi Brig. Gen. Yahya Saree said on the rebels' Al-Masirah satellite television station that they launched missiles toward "sensitive Israeli military sites" in the south. If the Houthis increase attacks on commercial shipping, as they have in the past, it would further push up oil prices and destabilize "all of maritime security," said Ahmed Nagi, a senior Yemen analyst at the International Crisis Group. "The impact would not be limited to the energy market." The Bab el-Mandeb, at the southern tip of the Arabian Peninsula, is crucial for vessels heading to the Suez Canal through the Red Sea. Saudi Arabia has been sending millions of barrels of crude oil a day through it because the Strait of Hormuz is effectively closed. Houthi rebels attacked more than 100 merchant vessels with missiles and drones, sinking two vessels, between November 2023 and January 2025, saying that it was acting in solidarity with Palestinians in Gaza during the Israel-Hamas war. The Houthis' latest involvement would complicate the deployment of the USS Gerald R. Ford, the aircraft carrier that arrived in Croatia on Saturday for maintenance. Sending it to the Red Sea could draw attacks similar to those on the USS Dwight D. Eisenhower in 2024 and the USS Harry S. Truman in 2025. The Houthis have held Yemen's capital, Sanaa, since 2014. Saudi Arabia launched a war against the Houthis on behalf of Yemen's exiled government in 2015, and they now have an uneasy ceasefire. Diplomacy attempts as U.S. beefs up troop numbers Pakistan said that Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Egypt will send top diplomats to Islamabad for talks aimed at ending the war, arriving Sunday for a two-day visit. Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said that he and Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian held "extensive discussions" on regional hostilities. But Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi told his Turkish counterpart by phone that Tehran was skeptical about recent diplomatic efforts. Iranian state-run media said that Araghchi accused the United States of making "unreasonable demands" and exhibiting "contradictory actions." Pakistani Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar later spoke with Araghchi and urged "an end to all attacks and hostilities." Trump envoy Steve Witkoff

has said that Washington delivered a 15-point "action list" to Iran for a possible ceasefire, with a proposal to restrict Iran's nuclear program — the issue at the heart of tensions with the U.S. and Israel — and reopen the Strait of Hormuz. Tehran rejected it and presented a five-point proposal that included reparations and recognition of its sovereignty over the waterway. Meanwhile, U.S. ships with around 2,500 Marines trained in amphibious landings have arrived, adding to the largest American force in the region in more than two decades. And at least 1,000 paratroopers from the 82nd Airborne Division, trained to land in hostile territory to secure key positions and airfields, have been ordered to the Middle East. U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio has said that Washington "can achieve all of our objectives without ground troops." U.S. troops wounded at Saudi base More than two dozen U.S. troops have been wounded in Iranian attacks on Saudi Arabia's Prince Sultan Air Base in the past week, according to two people briefed on the matter who spoke on condition of anonymity because they weren't authorized to comment publicly. Iran fired six ballistic missiles and 29 drones at the base Friday, injuring at least 15 troops, five of them seriously, they said. The base, about 96 kilometers (60 miles) from the Saudi capital Riyadh, was attacked twice earlier in the week, including a strike that wounded 14 U.S. troops, according to the people briefed on the matter. More than 300 U.S. service members have been wounded in the war. At least 13 have been reported killed. Death toll climbs Iranian authorities say more than 1,900 people have been killed in the Islamic Republic, while 19 have been reported dead in Israel. In Lebanon, where Israel has started an invasion in the south while targeting the Hezbollah militant group, officials said that more than 1,100 people in the country have been killed since the start of the war. In Iraq, where Iranian-supported militia groups have entered the conflict, 80 members of the security forces have died. In Gulf states, 20 people have been killed. Four have been killed in the occupied West Bank.

- [Oil spill deals economic blow to fishermen in the Gulf of Mexico](#) (2026-03-29 00:40)

VERACRUZ, Mexico — Every year, fish markets in the seaside Mexican city of Veracruz flood with a crush of customers in the lead up to Holy Week. This year, they were virtually empty. That's because a huge oil spill off the Gulf of Mexico has spread more than 373 miles (600 kilometers) across the ocean and seeped into seven nature reserves. Mexicans who have worked in Veracruz's booming fishing industry for years say they've been dealt a blow at one of the busiest times of the year. Markets usually jammed with customers were desolate on Friday, with some vendors loudly promoting their products in a desperate attempt to attract customers. Fishing has declined off the coasts of the seaside states of Veracruz, Tabasco and Tamaulipas since the spill. "This is our livelihood," said a worried Miguel López Rojas, owner of one of the fish stalls in the popular market. Authorities in the country said that the spill originated from a vessel anchored off the coast of the port city of Coatzacoalcos in Veracruz state and two "natural seepages." The government estimates that about 430 tons of hydrocarbons have been collected along the coasts of the three Mexican states, but have ruled out severe environmental damage from the spill. Despite that, reports and images have been circulated by local media of dead turtles, eels and fish washing up on Mexican beaches and

floating near shorelines. López Rojas said that the oil spill hasn't only caused a dramatic drop in fish supplies, but also a decline in purchases, as consumers are avoiding the product. Amid public concern, federal health authorities have denied any reports of illnesses linked to consuming fish or seafood because of possible contamination. But concern nonetheless has circulated across the country. Susana Gutiérrez, a 67-year-old seamstress, said from a market in Mexico City that "you have to be careful with the pollution because we still don't know what this spill could lead to." As federal and state authorities intensify efforts to contain the spill and clean up beaches, fishermen have also struggled to make ends meet as they have been forced to almost completely halt fishing to prevent boat engines and nets from being contaminated with oil, effectively losing their main source of income. "This year has been very disastrous for us, because in all my years of life we had never experienced something of this magnitude," said Norma González Pérez, a fisherwoman from the town of Salinas in southwestern Veracruz. Veracruz is one of Mexico's main fish producers. In 2024, the eastern state generated about 2.76% of the country's fish, oyster and seafood production, according to official figures. Fish are an essential component to many of the state's traditional plates. Authorities haven't yet provided an estimate of how many fishermen have been affected by the spill, but activists say it could be several hundred. González Pérez said things have become so bad for some fishermen that they have had to resort to bank loans. Holy Week, once a festive season for them marked by an abundance because of an annual fish migration in the Gulf of Mexico, now feels a lot more grim, she said. "This year there will be no celebration or anything," González Pérez said. "This year we will basically have nothing."

- [Sailboats carrying aid reach Cuba after going missing](#) (2026-03-29 00:34)

HAVANA, Cuba — Two sailboats carrying humanitarian aid to crisis-hit Cuba reached Havana on Saturday after disappearing during a longer-than-expected journey from Mexico that triggered a search-and-rescue operation. The crew of nine -- who included American, French and German citizens and a four-year-old boy -- appeared in good health and spirits, smiling and giving thumbs-up as they moored in the capital under clear skies. The vessels delivered the final shipments of Our America Convoy, an international humanitarian effort that has brought aid to support Cuba as a US oil blockade deepens the island's energy and economic crisis. "We are very sorry to make people worried about us. We were never in any real danger," Adnaan Stumo, a 33-year-old American and coordinator of the sailing convoy, told reporters. "It was not a very difficult journey. It's just a circuitous journey," Stumo said. The boy, he said, "is a strong, young sailor." "We're so happy to bring a crew from so many different countries that are demonstrating solidarity and support for the Cuban people in the face of this criminal blockade," Stumo said. The ships were greeted by scores of Cubans, including government officials, chanting "long live the revolution!" and "down with imperialism!" "They scared us a little because we kept wondering, 'when will they get here?'" Gerardo Hernandez, a former Cuban spy who served time in US prison, told the crowd. "Not worried at all" The Friend Ship and Tiger Moth, which set sail from southeast Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula on March 20, had been expected to arrive in Cuba on Tuesday or Wednesday. But the Mexican Navy announced a

search-and-rescue mission Thursday after losing communication with them, raising concerns about their fate. After a tense wait, organizers of the convoy reported early Saturday that the Mexican Navy had finally located the boats and that the crews were safe. The Navy said one of its aircraft had spotted the sailboats 80 nautical miles northwest of Havana. It then deployed a ship to support them. Stumo said the crews agreed to take a longer route north after facing strong winds from the east. Contact was lost with the Mexican Navy because the boat's small satellite link "was on the fritz." They reestablished contact with the Mexican Navy plane. "We were not worried at all," Stumo said, noting that arriving on schedule is never a sure thing on sailboats. "We are very thankful that the Mexican Navy came out and looked for us last night." The sailboats brought medicine, food, hygiene products and other supplies. 'Cuba is next' The first shipments from the convoy arrived by plane from Europe and the United States last week. A fishing boat that was converted into an aid vessel, which had also left Mexico last week, arrived in Cuba on Tuesday. It had been escorted by a Mexican Navy ship part of the way. In total, the convoy brought more than 50 tonnes of medical supplies, food, water and solar panels to Cuba, with hospitals among the recipients. Cuban exiles in Miami and other critics have slammed the convoy as benefiting the communist government more than ordinary people. US President Donald Trump imposed a de facto oil blockade on Cuba in January after US forces seized Venezuelan leader Nicolas Maduro, whose government had been Cuba's principal source of fuel. Trump has also threatened tariffs on countries that ship oil to Cuba, whose aging electricity system has been hit by regular blackouts, including two nationwide outages last week. He renewed his threats on Havana on Friday, even as the US-Israeli war against Iran entered its second month, saying "Cuba is next."

- [Iran Guards threaten to hit US universities in Mideast](#) (2026-03-29 00:30)

TEHRAN, Iran — Iran's Revolutionary Guard on Sunday threatened to target US universities in the Middle East after saying US-Israeli strikes had destroyed two Iranian universities. "If the US government wants its universities in the region to be free from retaliation... it must condemn the bombing of the universities in an official statement by 12 noon on Monday, March 30, Tehran time," said the statement published by Iranian media. The statement added: "We advise all employees, professors, and students of American universities in the region and residents of their surrounding areas" stay a kilometre away from campuses. Several US universities have campuses scattered throughout the Gulf region, such as Texas A&M University in Qatar and New York University in the United Arab Emirates. Strikes overnight Friday to Saturday hit Tehran, including the university of science and technology in the northeast of the capital, damag

- [Lebanon kids struggle to keep up studies as war slams school doors shut](#) (2026-03-29 00:26)

BEIRUT, Lebanon — In a classroom turned shelter for displaced families, teenager Ahmad Melhem follows a recorded lesson on a tablet as the war between Hezbollah and Israel interrupts education for hundreds of thousands of students in Lebanon. "I don't want to regret not finishing my studies despite the difficult circumstances," said Melhem, whose family was

displaced from Beirut's southern suburbs, the site of repeated Israeli bombardment. "We took a risk and went back to get schoolbooks," he told AFP. "We're trying with everything we have to continue our education so we can achieve our goals," said the 17-year-old, who hopes to study engineering after finishing high school. Crisis-hit Lebanon was pulled into the Middle East war on March 2 when militant group Hezbollah fired rockets towards Israel to avenge the US-Israeli killing of Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. Israel has responded with large-scale strikes on Lebanon and a ground offensive in the country's south, killing more than 1,100 people -- including 122 children -- and displacing more than one million people, according to authorities. The United Nations children's agency UNICEF says the war has left almost half a million students out of school in Lebanon, after more than 350 public schools were turned into shelters and many in areas under Israeli bombardment were closed. Melhem's family and others are sharing a classroom divided up by plastic curtains at a school in a central Beirut district, the room scattered with thin mattresses and blankets, a table and small stove serving as a shared kitchen. 'Digital divide' In the corner, Melhem has set up his books and a computer screen, but there is no internet in the room. An NGO has provided internet access in the schoolyard, crowded with children playing and families socialising, but Melhem says he cannot concentrate because of the noise, so he watches the recorded classes later. His private school resumed distance learning two weeks after the war began, after cancelling subjects and shortening lessons. "In-person (class) is better and more engaging," he said. "I miss group work and the science projects we used to do." According to a 2023 World Bank report, each day of public school closures costs the Lebanese economy three million dollars. In the courtyard, Melhem's mother helps her other son, aged eight, to follow his online classes. "If I leave him alone, his mind wanders and he can't keep up with the lesson," says Salameh, 41. "The war has destroyed everything," she added. "Education is the only thing left for my children." UNICEF's head of education in Lebanon, Atif Rafique, expressed particular concern about the future of students who are preparing to enter university while the war continues. He warned of the dangers of children dropping out of school, especially "girls and adolescent young women" who face additional risks, including early marriage. 'Not even pens' In Dekwaneh, north of Beirut, at a vocational institute that is now a shelter, Aya Zahran said she spends her day "preparing food and working to make the place livable". "We have only one phone that my siblings and I share," said Zahran, 17, who is also displaced from Beirut's southern suburbs. But "the link the school sent us (for online classes) doesn't work", she said. Rafique said hundreds of public schools lack the resources for distance learning, and noted a "big digital divide" when it comes to internet access, with teachers also affected. UNICEF has helped launch an online platform with recorded lessons, and a hotline allowing students to access materials through a phone call, without needing internet access. He said children in south Lebanon have been disproportionately affected by education interruptions since the last round of hostilities between Israel and Hezbollah broke out in October 2023. Just a week before the latest war began, UNICEF reopened 30 schools in the south that had been damaged in the previous conflict, he said. At the vocational institute's entrance, an education ministry employee was registering children to assess what educational services they need. "The situation here is very difficult... there's no internet here, and not even pens," said Nasima Ismail, who has been displaced from the

northeast Bekaa region, as she signed up her children."My children are top students. I don't want them to miss out on their education, as happened to us when we were kids," said Ismail, recalling Lebanon's devastating 1975-1990 civil war."I want them to complete their education, even if we are left with nothing," she said."I wish them days better than ours."